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GUIDES AND GUARDS
IN
Character-Building.

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IN

Character-Building.

BY

C. H. PAYNE, D.D., LL.D.,

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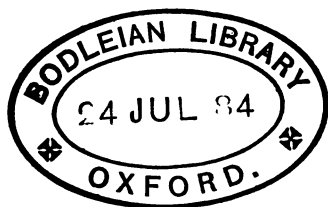
London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXXIV.

106. e. 3



*Printed from American Plates by Special Arrangement with the
Author.*

Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Limited, London and Aylesbury.

PREFACE.

THE building of a strong character and the living of a true life constitute our one work in this world; to aid in this high achievement is the aim of these lectures.

They are published because not a few persons, who heard them as delivered, have given assurance of having received special help from them, and have urged their publication, and because I have a growing conviction that the press—undoubtedly the most powerful agency for good or for evil in society—ought to be more largely employed for life's higher ends.

They make no claim to great literary excellence. They are selected, rather than others which embrace a wider range of thought, because they have a definite and thoroughly practical aim, and cover a field of endeavor which is to-day largely engaging the attention

of ministers and teachers and other Christian workers.

Indeed, the hope is cherished that pastors and teachers may find in this volume an auxiliary in their important work, and may deem it worthy of such use, by placing it in the hands of young disciples and others whom they may wish to inspire with worthy conceptions of life and duty.

A part of these discourses were delivered on Sabbath evenings, while engaged in the work of the pastorate, and with special reference to the young men of my congregation. These were repeated, and others added, after entering upon my present work, and were given as Sabbath afternoon lectures before the students of the University and the citizens of the town. A few of them have been delivered at Chautauqua and elsewhere, on special occasions, and have appeared in some periodicals. The favor with which these have been received has influenced the decision to give them this more permanent form. They are published essentially as delivered, partly because pressing duties left

no time for revising them, and partly because it is believed that their object may be quite as effectually secured by retaining the features of direct application and fervent appeal, leaving them to speak from the printed page substantially as they did from the pulpit and the platform.

The endeavor to bring out in connection with each character those traits which belong to it as a whole will account for any similarity of treatment. Certain distinctive qualities belong to all illustrious men, and cannot be omitted in the study of their characters. The method of development, however, will be found to differ largely in the treatment of each.

Though aiming at special adaptation to the young, the principles which underlie the forming and preserving of character, and the questions which relate to successful living, are subjects that can never cease to be interesting and helpful to persons in every period of life.

While these studies deal mostly with the representative *men* of the Bible, as furnishing freer scope and imposing less restraint in their

discussion than could otherwise be secured, yet, happily, *character* is essentially the same in both sexes, and it is hoped that, as the audiences to which they were originally addressed were composed of all classes, so these "Guides and Guards" may prove to be a help and an inspiration, alike to young men and young women, and also to those of maturer years, whose sterner work and heavier burdens call for amplest strength.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHARACTER-BUILDING ACCORDING TO PATTERN	9
JOSEPH THE INCORRUPTIBLE YOUNG MAN.....	31
MOSES THE UNCROWNED KING.....	53
DAVID : FROM THE SHEEP-FOLD TO THE THRONE.....	77
ABSALOM THE FAST YOUNG MAN.....	103
SOLOMON THE BRILLIANT FAILURE.....	123
DANIEL THE UNCOMPROMISING YOUNG MAN.....	143
LOT THE SELF-SEEKER.....	171
RUTH THE TRUE-HEARTED.....	191
JOHN THE BAPTIST THE COURAGEOUS MAN.....	213
THOMAS THE HONEST SCEPTIC.....	233
CORNELIUS THE TRUTH-SEEKER.....	257
TIMOTHY THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE—THE RELIGION OF CHARACTER AND THE RELIGION OF SENTIMENT.....	279
PAUL THE HERO.....	307
SELF-RESPECT AND SELF-CONTROL.....	339

CHARACTER-BUILDING
ACCORDING TO PATTERN.

"Let every man take heed how he buildeth."—ST. PAUL.

"Man is the architect of circumstance. Our strength is measured by our plastic power. From the same materials one man builds palaces, another hovels; one warehouses, another villas; bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks until the architect makes them something else. Thus it is that, in the same family, in the same circumstances, one man rears a stately edifice, while his brother, vacillating and incompetent, lives forever amid ruins."—CARLYLE.

"In respect to these great questions we ought to take the best of human reasonings, that which is most difficult to be confuted, and embark on it as on a raft, so to sail through life amid its storms, *unless we could be carried more safely in a surer conveyance furnished in some Divine instruction.*"—SOCRATES.

"See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."—**HEBREWS** viii, 5.

TO Moses, the distinguished lawgiver and leader of God's people, was committed a great work, and to him was granted a great privilege. The long-en-slaved people were to be educated; right conceptions of God, a becoming reverence for him, fear of his awful majesty, faith in his purity and mercy, must be taught them. For this purpose a sacred tabernacle was to be built, which should symbolize the Divine Presence, and impress upon all the people God's immanence and power. To qualify Moses for successfully carrying forward this great work God called him to ascend the mount of Sinai, and there, amid scenes of startling grandeur, revealed to him a perfect pattern of the tabernacle which he was to erect, and of all its furnishings, together with the form of worship to be conducted in it.

Communing there with Jehovah, face to face, with the clear vision of the sacred edifice ineffaceably impressed upon the mind, the solemn charge was laid

upon Moses, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." That vision and that charge were given to Moses; the lessons which they teach remain for our profit. We may profitably trace the parallel between *our work* and that of the Hebrew leader, and remind ourselves that to *us*, as well as to him, is committed a work of incalculable importance; to us is given a divine pattern for our guidance, and upon our ears also falls the solemn charge to follow faithfully the heavenly pattern.

All of us are builders—builders for time and for eternity. The building of the sacred edifice of character, which is to be a holy temple for God to dwell in; the raising of the stately structure of a life-work which shall be enduring as the years of God; the laying of secure foundations for that heavenly home in which we all hope to dwell—these are the high and heaven-appointed employments of our earthly years.

Concerning this work two things are true:

First. The Divine Pattern is given to us all.

Second. The Divine Pattern must be followed in order to a true and successful life.

To these two suggestive facts your thoughtful attention is invited.

I. The Divine Pattern is given to us all.

Not blindly nor ignorantly do we pursue our life vocation. Up into the mount of privilege God calls

each of us, and there reveals the heavenly pattern of our life-work. High as was the privilege granted to Moses, equal or greater is that given to us. Quite too much, indeed, has this life of ours of the earthly and the carnal; but it need not *all* be "of the earth, earthy." Into it flames a heavenly light; down upon its clamor and confusion sounds a supernatural voice, summoning us to mounts of revelation and converse with heavenly powers.

The yearning of all true hearts to hear the voice of God and to know his thought and will concerning us is fully met in these divine revealings. What are these holy heights where God reveals to you the heavenly plan according to which you are to build?

1. *The Mount of Divine Illumination*, where conscience sits enthroned, and utters her authoritative voice as she summons you to her tribunal. That voice of warning and restraint, of persuasion and guidance, is often heard above the Babel of earthly voices that press their urgent pleas. That voice, sanctioning the right, condemning the wrong, is God's own call to a life of fidelity to him. The light which shines in upon the soul in this inner sanctuary comes from God himself, and the vision of a life of duty and obedience which, through the illumination of conscience, passes before the mind, is God's own revealing of the true life which he wills that you should live.

The voice and the vision vary in clearness and distinctness, but they are given to all, and will become clearer and more distinct as they are heeded and obeyed.

On this mount of illumination, also, the Holy Spirit flashes his revealing light and utters his divine voice, giving increased emphasis to the call of conscience, and intensifying the vision of the divine pattern for our earthly building. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee" on *this* privileged mount, and follow the leadings of conscience and the appeals of the Spirit as God's divinely-ordained guide to a true and triumphant life.

2. There is also the *Mount of Divine Revelation through the Inspired Word*. In the pages of Homer and Virgil, of Shakespeare and Milton, you are invited to the mount of communion with these illustrious men. Great, indeed, is that privilege. You live in their immediate presence; you breathe the atmosphere which surrounded them; you listen to their voices; you think their thoughts, and learn the priceless lessons garnered from their lives. In the Bible, you are permitted to commune with the eternal God, to hear his voice as certainly as Moses heard it on the quaking mount. Familiarity with the thought of a divine revelation may have destroyed its startling effect and blinded your eyes to its transcendent importance, but

still the marvelous fact exists that here God calls you into his awful, yet glorious, presence, and talks with you face to face, as with Moses on the mount, amid pealing thunders and flashing lightnings. This is God's special and individual revelation to every man to whom it is given.

And here God reveals to each of us his own plan for all our earthly building and work. The plan revealed is set before us with sufficient distinctness, completeness, and fullness of detail. It is given to us not only in doctrine and in precept, but it is clearly illustrated in the *histories* and *biographies* with which the sacred book abounds, and which, as their subjects follow or disregard the divine direction, always secure or miss life's highest good; and thus, in a peculiar sense, they serve as "guides" or "guards" to us who are favored with the inspired record of their successes and failures.

And if at any time the pattern becomes vague in the mind, the divine original is at hand, and the vision may be renewed with perfect clearness.

The most remarkable feature about this inspired volume is that the great end for which it appears to have been given is precisely that which we are now seeking to emphasize, namely, *to teach us how to live*—to reveal to us a *heavenly ideal* for our *earthly life*.

Here, then, in this holy mount of revelation, you

are summoned to talk with God ; and here is shown to you the perfect pattern of all you are to be and to do. Will you, can you, despise or treat with disrespect or with neglect a privilege more exalted than that with which Moses, most honored of world-renowned heroes, was favored ? Will you close your eyes to the heavenly vision, or stop your ears to the heavenly voice ? Nowhere else in all earth's countless volumes, teeming with the wisdom of sages and philosophers, bright with the visions of poets and painters, will you find such a true ideal of life and all its noblest work, such a sure guide to finest issues and sublimest results. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee" in *this* favored mount of divine revelation.

3. But in a pre-eminent sense is the pattern revealed to us on the *Mount of Divine Manifestation*. Moses saw only in vision the plan of the tabernacle which he was to build, but we, more privileged than was he, are permitted to behold the glorious pattern which we are to follow, clothed in concrete and tangible form, taking on our own humanity, standing before our ravished eyes incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ. Yes, the pattern has been given to us, not in visionary outline, not in abstract rules, not in principle and precept alone, not merely in the lives of the human characters who figure on the sacred page, but in the living form and loving life of the Son of God

himself. That is the very summit of privilege to which we have been exalted.

No other truth that ever fell on human ear is equal in majesty and worth to that sublime record of the incarnation, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

The earth has seen the glorious *Person* of its Creator and Saviour; no other vision of prophet or seer can equal that transcendent sight!

This manifestation is to us. The entrancing vision has not faded from the view of men like a forgotten dream. It hangs before us to-day in all its pristine glory and divine beauty.

And this divine personage embodies in his character and work all that is grandest in conception and noblest in achievement in human life. He was, he is, the Perfect Pattern according to which all of us are to model our lives. And the portrait of this spotless character and the record of this wonderful life are incomparably the most priceless boon ever given to man. As often as you turn to this picture in the Gospel narrative, you ascend to a mount of privileged communion more sacred and precious than that which Christ's chosen apostles enjoyed when they sat by his side on the Mount of Olives, or Mary when she sat at his feet in her house so honored by his presence

at Bethany, or John when, at that last and never-to-be-forgotten supper, he leaned upon his bosom.

Looking at this incarnation of truth, purity, duty, sacrifice, and love, we hear the heavenly voice calling to us, "See that thou make all things according to" *this* "pattern showed to thee" in this most sacred mount of divine manifestation.

To these holy eminences of divine illumination, divine revelation, and divine manifestation, God bids you rise; and here he speaks to you in a voice that cannot be misunderstood, and must not be disregarded.

4. There are also given to us all *seasons of special revelation*, times when the height to which we are lifted is greater, and earth with its blinding atmosphere seems farther removed—its strife and clamor more faint and ineffectual—while God's voice sounds clearer, and the heavenly vision is brighter.

There are times when the soul seems more susceptible of good influences, and the powers of evil relax their grasp, and tender memories steal in upon the mind, and the thoughts of a mother's love, and a father's prayers, and a teacher's counsels, and a Saviour's sympathy, and the Spirit's gentle wooings, hold the entire being for one supreme hour under their hallowing spell. Yes, dear friends, there are such moments in the life of every one of you, when the higher nature seems to triumph, and life wears a changed aspect, and the Will regains his usurped

throne, and Resolve takes the vision of life then revealed as the true ideal, henceforth to be master.

Cherish, friends, these favored seasons. Prize the revelations and purposes of these more elevated hours beyond all estimate. As travelers in mountainous regions, climbing to some high eminence where the glories of the entrancing view ravish the soul, *carry* the glorious vision with them, through all the future years of life; so take with you these clearest visions of the heavenly pattern, these best thoughts and holiest purposes and loftiest ideals, down into the lowest valley of temptation and strife. Do not let this great and ever-perpetuated warfare with the "world, the flesh, and the devil" find you in your worst, but ever in your *best*, condition—the heavenly armor always on, the holy purpose always strong to fight with valor the foes of life, and the heaven-revealed plan always kept before the mind to lend its ceaseless inspiration in life's daily battle.

Enough has been said to indicate what that pattern is which is given to us all, where and how it is revealed to us, and its infinite value; let us turn now to consider the second great fact that calls for our most serious attention, namely,

II. The Divine Pattern must be followed in order to a true and successful life.

There can be no neglect of this revealed plan, no failure to build after this model, no trifling with this

divine revelation as though it were a human fancy, without making one's life a melancholy failure ; and there can be no genuine acceptance of it without making one's life a true success.

1. Let it be kept in mind that this is *God's* plan for *your* life-work—God's ideal life for you. Reflect a moment and take in the full measure of this thought.

You look around you, above you, every-where, and see this vast physical universe. You observe that this planet of earth on which we live, though it seems so large, is but a small part of a *system of worlds* with which it stands intimately connected ; that yonder blazing sun, the central orb of this system, is as large as 1,300,000 worlds like ours, and around it are revolving other worlds of vast magnitude. Extending your vision you behold, by telescopic aid, stretching away into measureless space, *other suns and systems*, vaster and more incomprehensible, worlds upon worlds, a mighty and majestic host, which no eye can compass, no human powers can measure, and no terrestrial mathematics can compute, all marshaled in imposing array, and marching in unvarying order along their pathways through the skies. What is this amazing array of flaming worlds ? *God's thought* expressed in visible forms. What gives to this vast universe such perfect unity amid infinite variety ? *God's perfect plan*. What holds these myriad worlds

in their orbit and prevents a universal wreck? *Obedience to God's law*; never-wavering allegiance to his plan and purpose.

And the same God who conceived and called into being this stupendous universe, and in perfect accord with whose plan each rolling orb wheels round in its appointed orbit, *this God* has condescended to give to each of you *a plan for your life-work*.

Whether a life-pattern coming to us from such a source is *worth* our acceptance, whether it can be *rejected* or *neglected* without wreck of all worthy hopes, none but a madman can ever pause to question.

Every consideration of the character and majesty of God, of his relation to the universe and to ourselves, every consideration of honor and of privilege, of duty and of destiny, demand that, setting aside all personal shaping and directing of our life-building, we should unhesitatingly accept and unfalteringly follow the pattern given us by this divine Architect.

Not thus to respect the authority of the Divine Being is to insult his holy majesty, and to turn away with disdain from the beneficent power that protects you and daily pours his benisons upon you.

Once let the thought that *God's ideal of your life* has been really revealed to you actually possess the mind, with all its legitimate force, and nothing can prevent your yielding to its sway. Henceforth,

your life has a significance in it which belongs to nothing merely human ; it is a divine thing ; it is God's purpose and God's thought taking on a human form incarnated in you.

You *think* God's thoughts, you utter his words, you crystallize his will into actual deeds ; you project into this needy and sinful world of humanity a life that is heaven-planned and heaven-inspired, the copy of a divine ideal given to you by the almighty World-Builder.

And thus, because it is God's plan and not a human production, it must be followed ; because it is the "high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity" who has made you this wondrously condescending overture, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

2. All the lessons from analogy teach us the majesty of divine law—the penalty of violating, and the profit of obeying, its behests. See every-where in nature a perfect adjustment of part to complementary part, an adaptation of means to ends. Every thing shows purpose and plan. Law reigns ; order and harmony are the universal resultants. What if this earth were to rebel against the universal plan of the great Creator and break away from its allegiance to the great law of gravitation ! What chaos and confusion, what wreck and ruin, would ensue ! God is teaching man the lesson of obedience to divine law

and of harmony with the divine method by the myriad voices of the physical universe. He is teaching us also by symbols and by signs, as well as by the facts of science, to respect law and to observe order.

The tabernacle which Moses was commanded to build was an object-lesson for the Hebrews to teach them these essential truths. Its exact measurements, its minutely-described materials, its oft-recurring numbers of symbolic meaning, its outer and inner courts, its holy and most holy place, all symbolized order, stability, perfection. The cherubim, hovering over the ark with their wings meeting, taught the same great lesson of order and harmony, and declared the immanence of the great presiding Power who pervades all nature and governs all the affairs of men.

Attempt to disregard one of the laws which God has ordained, and you pay the penalty. Despise or forget the law of gravitation ; step from the roof of a house or the edge of a precipice as though the air were like the solid pavement for your feet, and, quickly dashed to the ground below, your mutilated body attests the foolhardiness of your lawless act. What have you done but violated God's order—set aside his laws ?

Can you, then, disregard no single part of his plan, *in nature*, without peril, and yet expect to set at naught his *entire plan for the government of your life* with immunity from evil consequences ?

No, friends, as certainly as there is but one God who made the universe and established its laws, and made *you* and put you under law, so certainly will that same God hold you to the acceptance of his perfect plan, or leave you to suffer the fearful penalties of its rejection.

3. And this Divine Pattern must be followed in its *completeness and comprehensiveness*, with all its particularity of detail.

Three perils lie in ambush, even for those who, with more or less strength of purpose, regard themselves as accepting the revealed plan for their life-building. The first is the peril of accepting it *in part*, but not in its completeness; the second is that of accepting it *theoretically*, but rejecting it *practically*; the third is the peril of accepting it *for a time*, but abandoning it before the life-work is completed.

Every-where in society, and not seldom in the Church of Christ, you will find representatives of these several classes of persons, subjects of a sad, practical failure in following God's plan, while yet they do not avowedly reject it.

But this is a matter concerning which profession and sentiment and expressed desire are worth no more than they would be on the part of a workman on a building *who disregarded the plan of the architect*, and built the structure in part or entirely according to *his own plan*. This question of building the

temple of character and of our life-work is an intensely practical one, and depends far less upon our desires and purposes than upon *the work actually done*, day by day, hour by hour, as the structure ever moves forward to completion.

Here, again, as ever, we must remind ourselves that we are all and always the subjects of inexorable law upon which sickly sentiment and cheap excuses have no effect. There is no other way of safety but to *avoid* the mistakes which will certainly vitiate the entire work of life, and cause it to end in pitiable failure.

And so, we repeat, God's plan must be taken, as he gives it to each, in all its completeness and particularity. In that pattern of the tabernacle showed to Moses, we may sometimes wonder why so many and minute and seemingly unimportant details were given by special revelation.

But the wonder ceases when one has once seen a model of that tabernacle, constructed just as Moses was bidden to construct it, the exact pattern followed in every minutest detail, not a ring or bar or knob or loop omitted; for then its simple beauty and symmetry are clearly apparent.

So, often, we may think that the life-plan given to us has much in it that is unimportant, and may be omitted without essential harm. We forget the perfect adjustment and mutual dependence of part to

part, and each minutest part to the completed whole; we forget that strength and symmetry and beauty of character are destroyed by any slightest omission or neglect, and that it is only when the full complement of apparently trifling particulars is reached that character and life attain their truest and greatest glory.

Besides, none but God knew the full meaning of every direction given in the pattern of the Hebrew tabernacle. Much, if not all of it, was both symbolical and typical, teaching great spiritual truths and typifying better things to come in the "heavenly tabernacle not made with hands." And thus may it be with the pattern shown to us; all its deepest depths of divine meaning and purpose, all its relations and far-reaching results, we may not now clearly perceive. But this we do know, though we often forget or fail to apply it in our daily lives, that nothing that God requires of us, however non-essential it may seem to us, is unimportant; and nothing that relates to life and duty and destiny is trivial or insignificant.

The greatest achievements of earth's greatest men have resulted from the utmost attention to minutest things. The architect, the sculptor, the painter, the poet—all have wrought their masterpieces by following with unwavering fidelity the ideal revealed to them on some favored mount of illumination. The pattern given, the ideal floating ever in the mind,

inspired the patient toil and painstaking detail necessary to the realization of their purpose.

"Why, you have done nothing to this statue since I was here months ago," said a friend to Michael Angelo, as he stood in the great sculptor's studio and looked at a marble figure before him. "O yes," replied the incomparable genius, "I have removed the blemish from that limb, softened that expression, given a gentler look to the eye, and carried it forward some steps toward completion." "But these are all trifles," interposed the visitor. "Yes," replied the matchless sculptor, "but trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." And so the illustrious artist toiled on with patient devotion to the seemingly petty details of his work, which unskilled eyes would rarely notice, until the completed statue called forth the praises of an admiring world. Nothing is unimportant in a world where every whisper goes sounding through the universe, and adds harmony or discord to the "music of the spheres."

"Pluck one thread and the web ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run."

I must not dwell upon the necessity of avoiding the peril, to which allusion has already been made, of *practically neglecting*, while we seem to accept, the divine pattern of our life.

The architect draws not only a representation of the entire structure as it stands completed in his own mind, but he draws for the workman's daily use what he terms the "working-plan." This must be ever kept in mind as each timber or stone or brick is placed in position. So the great Architect has given us not merely a general outline, but a *working-plan* of life.

And thus must you build, with God's working-plan of life and conduct ever in mind; watching daily with utmost care lest *another* plan than that of the divine Architect be substituted, and the work be marred beyond reparation. Substitute self for God, your own purpose for his will, pleasure for duty, compromise for unyielding integrity, prevarication for unqualified truth, and the sacred structure is irreparably weakened and deformed.

See to it, young friend, that day by day, not only in *purpose* but in *fact*, you actually do "make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

And then, too, you must beware lest, having *begun* to build according to the divine model, the heavenly vision fade away, the earnest endeavor cease, and the work end in mournful failure. How sad the thought of such a possible termination of a life-work begun in hope, and prosecuted at first with fairest promise. But can you call to mind no example of such a melancholy fate? no young man who began a life of

promise by praying in childhood at his mother's side, and ended in a drunkard's doom? no young man who left the parental roof with promises of obedience to the heavenly call upon his lips, who has forgotten those promises and pierced the hearts of parents with bitter pangs of grief? Are there none before me now who remember solemn vows made at God's altar—vows which have not been kept, holy purposes that have vanished into "airy nothings?"

Are there none who entered upon a course of study with the purpose of devoting their lives to the Christian ministry, who, by their neglect and thoughtlessness, have drifted into a realm of darkness and doubt and indifference to spiritual things? Am I addressing none from whose mind the blessed vision has faded? none to whom the lofty ideal of life has lost its beauty and attraction? none with whom the heavenly pattern has ceased to lend its inspiration to life?

If such there be, listen to these kindly voices from earth and heaven; recall the faded vision; renew the broken vows; rekindle the expiring flame of devotion; replace the withdrawn sacrifice upon the altar of consecration; and henceforth watch with double diligence, and, with never-faltering fidelity, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

This, then, is the priceless lesson of this hour's study. God reveals to each of you a perfect pattern

for your life. That life will be a success or a failure in exact proportion as you follow, or fail to follow, the divine pattern. Let neither of these twin truths ever lose its commanding influence over you.

If peril and failure lie along the path of disregard to the divine plan, safety and success are the certain results of heeding it. Build as the heavenly voice and vision bid you, and not all the forces of evil combined can make your life a failure. You may not build upon conspicuous heights that gorgeous temple of success at whose gilded shrines men love to worship. Your humbler edifice may not command the attention and admiration of the world; but it shall be the true development of God's ideal, reared in harmony with the eternal laws that hold the universe in being, and it shall stand while the throne of God endures.

JOSEPH
THE INCORRUPTIBLE YOUNG MAN.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; . . . in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—PROVERBS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."—TENNYSON.

"There is but one temple in the universe, and that is the body of man."—NOVALIS.

"His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'"
—SHAKESPEARE.

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."—GENESIS xlix, 23, 24.

THE book of human character, next to the book of God, contains the most valuable lessons for our study; and when the record of character is found *in* the sacred volume, the two sources of wisdom become one, and present a pre-eminent claim upon our attention. The lessons which may be learned from the study of the biographies of the Bible are serviceable to all classes of persons; but to the young, especially, they are invaluable.

Our present object is to portray some of the more prominent and representative characters of Bible history in such manner as to remove them from the realm of unreality in which the mind naturally places them, and bring them into real and realized relations with the world in which we live and circumstances essentially like those which surround ourselves. Thus it is hoped that in the study of these "Guides and Guards," which inspiration has given us for instruction and admonition, the youth and the manhood of

to-day may be strengthened and equipped for valiant warfare and victorious achievement in the battle of life.

We begin with one of the most perfect characters in the Scriptures. We may as well set before us at the outset the truest model, and bring ourselves into familiar intercourse with one of the noblest men whose record adorns the page of history. With the history of this Hebrew youth you are all familiar, and I shall not attempt to conduct you through all the details of his eventful life, but only pause, here and there, to ponder the lessons of the more conspicuous events in that life, and admire the beauty of his matchless character.

The one distinguishing feature of this character that most excites our admiration and deserves our study is its *unconquerable power of resistance* to the mighty forces of evil. Truthfully and eloquently did the hoary-headed Jacob say, as, dying, he placed his hand in benediction on Joseph's head, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." In this light we hold him up to your view as a model of integrity and honor—*Joseph the tried, the tempted, the incorruptible young man*. He was subjected to unusual tests, and stood the ordeal with resolute firmness and strength.

In the early years of Joseph's home-life he was the

subject of an unwise partiality on the part of his dotting father. The child of his beloved Rachel, the son of his old age, possessing rare amiability and excellence of character, Joseph was the object of Jacob's peculiar affection; that affection was ill-concealed. A richly-embroidered coat, given him as a mark of distinction, and many an act of fondness shown by the thoughtless father, pointed him out as the favorite child, and naturally enough stung the hearts of his less favored brothers, and made him the mark for the envenomed shafts of their envy. That this partiality of his father and ill-will of his brothers did not spoil the youth and embitter his heart only shows his native strength of character. Himself guileless and unsuspecting, he artlessly tells his brothers the strange dreams which prefigure his promotion and their abasement. This fans the flame of hatred in their breasts.

The opportunity for revenge comes; on an evil day he is sent to seek his brothers while they tend their flocks in the fields of Dothan, a long distance from home; the envious brothers seize him and thrust him into a deep pit to die. But a company of Arabian merchants happening—as men say—to pass by just at that juncture, these heartless brothers, prompted by cupidity, drag him from the pit, and for twenty pieces of silver sell him as a slave, to endure the cruelties of a life of bondage.

That was a dark day for the youthful Joseph.

Wrested suddenly from the arms of parental affection, borne away, a stranger and a captive, to a land unknown, his heart may well sink within him, as with the caravan of these strange-visaged Midianites, he slowly moves on to the land of Egypt. What thoughts crowd his mind! what burning tears wet his cheeks on this sad journey! But God, the ever-faithful, is still his friend, and his heart beats yet with hope while he feels the inspiration of a new-born strength.

At length the caravan reaches Egypt's proud capital, and Joseph is sold by his recent purchasers to Potiphar, captain of the guard of the Pharaoh who rules the land. See him, a lad of seventeen summers, hitherto inexperienced in the world, now far from home, a slave in a foreign land, without one earthly friend to counsel him.

New scenes are wont to test the character of youth. What a critical moment is that in the young man's life when he first leaves the dear old home, and goes forth to battle with life's forces alone! Entering a strange city, exposed to new temptations, forming new associates, released from home restraints—ah, how many a youth of promise, just at that eventful period, has begun a career of sin and sorrow! But Joseph, though in a heathen land, where false gods are universally worshiped, forgets not the God of his father; and the pious instructions of his early days, now ripened

into firm religious principles, prove a safeguard against the corrupting influences of his new surroundings.

And how fares it with this young Hebrew slave in the house of the Egyptian officer? Just as it always will with one who honors God and plants himself upon the eternal foundation of right-doing. "The Lord was with" him and prospered him, made all he did to prosper, and gave him favor in the sight of his master, who, discovering that he was a young man of piety and integrity, and that his God was with him, advanced him to the highest position in his household, made him overseer of all that he had, and trusted him unqualifiedly, placing in his hands the entire management of his affairs, and "knew not aught that he had, save the bread which he did eat."

Look at this picture, young men, struggling to rise in the world, and learn the basis of all true prosperity—fidelity to God and fidelity to man—the Lord's favor and the Lord's help. This is the most essential prerequisite to a successful life. Joseph the Israelitish slave, rising to the highest place in Potiphar's household, is a worthy study for every youth of our day.

But we must follow this youth of our story into yet more critical circumstances, and behold him successfully resisting the blandishments of sinful pleasure, beating back the fearful surges of temptation that dash against him, warding off the fiery arrows shot from the bow of wanton lust, if we would know

the true heroism of his character and see it shining in all its lustrous beauty. In that house where Joseph has found such favor is a fair tempter—his own mistress, wife of his master—a woman doubtless of queenly beauty, but of corrupt heart.

A pure-minded woman, true to her nature and her holy calling, is God's best evangel, and man's best angel on earth. Many such there are who bless the homes in which you live, and throw their hallowing light on the path you tread. But a bad woman, false to her nature and her mission, and fallen from her high estate of purity, is at once the darkest blot and the direst curse of society. In the very house of such a one Joseph's lot is cast. Day by day she fixes her evil eye on the well-favored youth, and, by all the machinations of an artful and wicked woman, seeks to win him to the way of sin.

We cannot but admire the inflexible integrity of this invincible youth. Here he is, in a strange land, completely in the power of his master and mistress; here are beauty, position, wealth, honor, power, uniting the charms of their seductive voices to lure him from virtue. He knows the power of this evil-purposed woman; he is a slave, she is his mistress; his hope of future favor, his very life, are in her hand. Besides, the law of Jehovah had not then been written on tables of stone; society had not attained that high plane of virtue which it now occupies. And yet,

not the caresses of an unhallowed love, not the promise of superior position, not the dreadful consequences of resistance, not all the combined influences of this fierce temptation, which swept over him like a hurricane blast, moved a single iota the granite column of that noble character, which stood secure on its firm foundation of virtue and religion. Strong and immovable as the pyramids, which from their lofty heights looked down upon that illustrious youth, was his own immaculate character.

It becomes us to ponder well this firm and manly element of character, and learn, if we can, the sources of this unconquerable strength. For Joseph stands not alone the subject of sharp temptation, of wanton smiles, and hellish arts. The archers are to-day shooting forth their poisonous arrows with fatal precision of aim, and many a man falls wounded by these deadly shafts. How shall they withstand these fiery darts? how resist the blandishments of sin? Not otherwise than as Joseph did. Mark well, therefore, the weapons with which he conquered.

The fear of God—the consciousness of being in *his* all-seeing presence—this was the mighty safeguard which protected him against the fierce assaults of the evil one. “How then can I do this great wickedness, and *sin against God?*” is the weapon which he hurls into the smiling face of this fair form of evil. It is not that he is apprehensive of the consequences of

sin, but it is because he fears God, and dares not, will not, sin against him. Above the enticing notes of the tempter, above the dulcet tones of pleasure, above the pleadings of apparent self-interest, above the clamorous cry of passion, is heard the clear, calm voice of conscience saying, "Do not this great wickedness and sin against God." Whoever heeds this sacred voice is safely shielded from the tempter's power; whoever heeds it not ventures into the dark and slippery paths of sin, and his "feet shall slide in due time."

The fear of God, then, was the anchor which held this imperiled youth; and, my young friend, only this anchor will hold you when the winds of temptation furiously rage and the storm of passion beats high—this only will save you from making shipwreck of virtue, and from the loss of all that is dear and worthy and true. Well does Basil say of this grace that it is "the store-house of other virtues;" and Chrysostom calls it "the mother and root and nurse and foundation and bond of all good things in us."

And this fear of God teaches a man *prudence*, even as it did Joseph. He is wise, who, when temptation meets him face to face, *resists* with invincible purpose; but he is wiser who *flees* from the fascinating charm of evil, avoiding the very occasion of sin. Thus Joseph will lend no *listening ear* to the voice of evil, stops not to bandy words in dalliance with temptation, but flees from its presence, and walks

forth with the conscious dignity of a conqueror. How many a man, with no thought of basely *surrendering* to temptation, will yet linger around its enchanting presence, charmed by its honeyed words, and fascinated by its witching spell, until, like the foolish moth, he, too, is lured into the fatal flames! One of Satan's most successful arts is to induce young persons to *look* at masked evil. Your only safety is in obeying the counsel of inspiration, "*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*"

We have now to view Joseph's character subjected to another severe test—that of sudden reverses of fortune. That firm refusal to sin against God cost him something. He knew it would; and it is this fact that imparts the element of heroism to his act. He deliberately chooses rather to suffer than to sin.

And now, as the result of his fidelity, the malicious darts of calumny are hurled at him.

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."

The fiery rage of this shameless woman now vents its fury on the innocent subject of her seductive arts; and he whom no art nor wile could seduce from the way of purity, now stands before his master accused of the basest crime. Joseph is immediately seized and rudely cast into prison. It is not an easy thing

to stand calmly under the imputation of a false accusation. To suffer wrongfully, and *because* of your fidelity to the right, requires true heroism of soul. Behold such greatness in the bearing of the falsely-accused and imprisoned Joseph! Conscious of his own integrity and the spotlessness of his character, he calmly leaves his reputation and his life in the hands of that God whose he is and whom he serves.

He might easily have yielded to this sudden reverse—as many another has yielded to one less trying—and have said, “It is all over with me now. Reputation blasted, position lost, friends gone, incarcerated in this dismal dungeon—all is lost.” Not thus ingloriously did this brave-hearted man surrender. He has not lost all, nor *much*, when weighed in God’s balances. He still has—what no king can wrest from him, and no dungeon exclude from his enjoyment—the rich heritage of an unsullied character, a pure conscience, and, with these treasures, the favor of the ever-blessed God.

“What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
The soul’s calm sunshine and the heart-felt joy,
Is virtue’s prize.”

“The Lord was with Joseph” in prison. There is a whole volume of blessed history in that one sentence. Nothing more need be added. He was happy; he was prosperous; he was honored; he was safe. Put a man

anywhere, at any post of duty or of danger, with a pure character, an enlightened conscience, a grace-renewed heart, and the infinite God for his companion, and he needs no other guaranty of safety or success. He will find and follow the one best way.

How fares it, again we ask, with this Hebrew youth in these new and greatly changed circumstances? Let every young man look into that prison and learn how to secure the success he seeks—how to win the highest prizes of life.

“Honor and shame from no *condition* rise,
Act well *thy* part, *there* all the honor lies.”

And act that part in the fear of God and with his ever-proffered help.

Joseph in prison is the same man that he was in the house of Potiphar. Circumstances do not change a true and royal character. They neither make nor unmake the genuine man. A diamond is not less a diamond, trampled under foot of man, than when it flashes on the bosom of royalty. Here, in this accused prisoner, is a diamond character flashing forth its brilliant hues through all these gloomy prison cells.

It does not take the jailer long to learn the character and worth of his new charge. Joseph commands the same respect and confidence here as when, a slave, he entered the house of Potiphar. And, as then he soon rose to the highest position of trust, so here, we

soon find him intrusted with the care and guardianship of all his fellow-prisoners. How simple, yet instructive, the Scripture record! "But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

And God thus manifests his favor to Joseph because *he* recognizes and honors God. He is the same prayerful, God-fearing, God-honoring man here in the presence of these coarse associates that he has ever been, and plucks the ripened fruit of the promise, "Him that honoreth me, I will honor."

And when the Lord, true ever to his purpose, undertakes to honor and to help the faithful doer, he is at no loss for opportunities and resources. It matters not whether such a one is in a prison or a palace, on a cobbler's bench or on a throne: God can raise him from the one to the other as easily as he lifts the mantle of darkness from the earth and wraps it in the white robe of light. Ah, if men but knew, if young men could but see, how readily God can bring them deliverance, blessing, honor—all they need of gain and of good—they would honor and trust him more!

If there was in all that land of the Nile one whose condition seemed more hopeless than that of another it was this Hebrew slave and prisoner in his Egyptian dungeon. Yet God was preparing a palace for his abode, horses and chariots for his service, and the honors of a kingdom to be cast at his feet! "God raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill; that he may set him with princes." Among his fellow-prisoners are two of the king's servants. Each of them has a dream, and Joseph interprets their dreams. Mark you, it is through the wisdom which God gives that he has the power of interpretation, and he does not fail to acknowledge this fact. The interpretation proves correct—the one is liberated, the other slain. The restored butler forgets, in his base ingratitude, the friend of his prison-life, and for two more long years Joseph waits and works, prays and hopes, shut in from the light of day.

But God is not in haste as men are. He knows the glorious issue of his plans, and calmly waits their consummation. If we knew him better and trusted him more we should become *partakers* of that sublime patience which knows no weariness. There is no more essential lesson for a young man to master than this—"Learn to labor and to wait." Be not in haste to grasp the glittering prize for which you toil. It will be worth the more, you will be the more

worthy of it, after the earnest struggling and the patient waiting of years of persevering effort.

But God's time comes at last; and no ingratitude of friends nor wrath of enemies can stay its coming. He that can put dreams into the king's mind, and give the spirit of wisdom for their interpretation to the young Hebrew prisoner, can surely bring the needed deliverance to every imprisoned spirit of earth, no matter how secure his dungeon nor how strongly forged his claims. Pharaoh, the king, dreams, and the ungrateful butler now remembers, in the long-forgotten Hebrew slave, one who can reveal to Pharaoh the meaning of his night-vision. Joseph is summoned, and is soon standing before this mighty Pharaoh, listening to the rehearsal of his mysterious dream. Behold him unabashed in the presence of royalty, and hear his modest acknowledgment of his God, and his dependence upon *him* for the wisdom which he possesses.

"It is not in me," says Joseph, in reply to the monarch's flattering allusion to his prophetic ability, "*God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

He who was not ashamed to confess his God before his fellow-prisoners blushes not to acknowledge him before a heathen king. The dream, as interpreted by Joseph, presaged seven years of bountiful harvests, followed by seven years of gaunt famine. The interpretation given, this youthful prophet ventures to

counsel the troubled ruler to choose a man, discreet and wise, who in the season of plenty shall lay up ample stores for the time of want. But who so wise and qualified for this difficult task as this same Hebrew youth, "in whom the Spirit of God is?"

Therefore, after consultation, Joseph the stranger—fresh from his prison-cell—is appointed by Pharaoh to be the prime minister of his kingdom. Thus speaks Pharaoh to the humble released prisoner: "Forasmuch as God has showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand"—a badge of highest honor—"and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee."

Did ever the tide of fortune turn so quickly and flow in so suddenly to the very flood-height of worldly prosperity? "Behold, one hour hath changed his fetters into a chain of gold, his rags into robes, his stocks into a chariot, his jail into a palace; Potiphar's captive to his master's lord, the noise of his chains into" the acclaim of the prostrate multitude!

Picture to yourself Joseph, now but thirty years of age, exalted to this dizzy height of power. He lives in yonder palace, probably in the city of Heliopolis, famous for its magnificent buildings, its grand temple—sacred to the sun—its priesthood, its wise and learned men. Hither the wise men of Greece resorted, in after years, to seek wisdom. Here, a thousand years later and more, Solon, Plato, and Herodotus studied Egyptian lore. Only a single obelisk of red granite to-day marks the spot of all this departed greatness. But in Joseph's time the proud city was in the height of its splendor. In the midst of this magnificence and learning, and these spectacular rites of heathen worship, *he* moved, most illustrious of all, crowned with highest honors; under the shadow of this same monolith that stands to-day in its silent, solemn grandeur, he rode in his costly chariot, and Egypt's wisest and most honored sons bowed in humble obeisance before him.

Will his character stand this test—severer it may be than any heretofore applied—of sudden elevation to prosperity and power, honor and wealth? Many a man is there, who, in his lowly home of poverty, knelt upon his uncarpeted floor, morning and evening, and sent up his grateful offering of praise and prayer to heaven, but who, when that humble abode is exchanged for the costly mansion, with its splendid appointments, bows not the knee in prayer upon that carpet of richest texture, and offers no sweet incense

of praise to him whose favor has loaded him with benefits.

Many a man who walked in the humble path of poverty, or the darkened way of adversity, with a conscious integrity, and cleansed his way "by taking heed thereto according to" God's "word," when lifted to the paths of higher social position, corrupts his way by parting hands with virtue, and forsaking the God of his less prosperous years.

There is many a man to-day in the halls of legislation, in the highest places of power, prayerless, godless, virtueless, who was once a praying youth. Ah, my friends, it is not so much the bleak, fierce winds that sweep along the valleys and around the mountain bases of adversity that blight manhood and blast virtue and destroy character, as it is the fervid rays from the zenith sun beaming upon those who stand on the dazzling heights of prosperity. There is, probably, no greater peril before you than that of elevation to the very heights of position which you seek to gain.

But this young man, whose character we are studying, bears his new honors, and withstands the influence of his sudden prosperity, as few are wont to do. He is the same humble, faithful, God-serving man in the palace that he was in the prison. Though married to the daughter of the high-priest, who ministers at the altars of that magnificent Temple of the Sun, Joseph still cleaves to the religion of his youth, and

is known through all that idolatrous land as the devout worshiper of the Hebrew's God—Jehovah. He acknowledges the divine appointment of his mission, and fulfills it with a singleness of purpose and a purity of character which we cannot but admire.

We must rapidly pass over the remaining portion of his history, though full of intensest interest. The years of plenty pass, and his superior administrative ability fills the store-houses of the land for the years of famine which follow.

One day there stand before him ten Israelitish men, who, pinched with hunger, have come down to buy corn to carry back to the land of Canaan. He starts back with surprise as he looks into their faces—they are his brothers, who, more than twenty years before, had heartlessly sold him to the wandering Midianites. Now, at length, the opportunity for revenge has come. A single word from him and they may be immured in the darkest dungeon, or hurried away to instant death. But revenge finds no place in that great-souled man. That royal nature is too magnanimous for such a base passion. Love only burns in that bosom; and he longs to throw himself into their arms. And when he has tested the strength of their affection for their aged father, and for their youngest brother, Benjamin, he makes himself known to them, falling upon their necks, weeping and kissing each with all the fondness of an ardent lover.

Gratefully and joyfully he sends for his gray-haired father, and provides a home of comfort for his old age, and for all his brothers, with their families. History records no more beautiful or touching scene. Unlike many a man, who, in his prosperity, forgets his father's family, Joseph shows the superior qualities of his nature by his ardent, filial, and fraternal affection.

Thus rapidly have we glanced at the life and character of this distinguished youth. We have seen him filling and adorning every station in life with a manliness of bearing and fidelity to duty, eliciting universal respect and praise—a manly boy, a dutiful son, an affectionate brother, a trusty servant, a considerate master, a wise statesman, a discreet administrator, a humble, faithful believer in God. A character so firm yet tender, strong yet lovable, exalted and pure, let us seek to emulate.

Reluctantly we leave the contemplation of such a character, taking to our inmost hearts the priceless lessons which it teaches. Learn hence, young friend, that it is not from surrounding circumstances, nor yet alone from early training, that true manhood comes. Joseph's brothers enjoyed the advantages of pious instruction equally with himself; yet he alone, of all the sons of Jacob, presents a character that is not sadly marred and unlovely. You must make *yourself* by God's help. True nobility must develop from within, and cannot be given you by another—

"Destiny is not about thee, but within—
Thyself must make thyself."

The one great lesson which the life of Joseph teaches us—a lesson which I would fain write upon your heart with the earnest tenderness of a brother—is this: True religion furnishes the only sure foundation of character, and the only safeguard against temptation. Build your character on any other foundation, and when the swelling tides of temptation surge against it, and the tempest blasts of evil sweep over it, the feeble, tottering structure will fall, and with it will perish all your hopes for time and for eternity. But build upon this "Rock," and neither the fearful surges of sin, nor the threatening waves of death, nor the mighty billows of eternity, shall move the stately structure from its everlasting foundation. It will stand through time and through eternity a sacred temple of the Lord, and in it the soul shall offer up her grateful praise and sing her ceaseless song of joy.

Remember, then, O young man, if you would have your "bow" abide "in strength," while the archers shoot their death-dealing arrows at you, that the "arms" of your "hands" must be "made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob," and the God of Joseph, the Incorruptible Young Man.

MOSES
THE UNCROWNED KING.

"He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."—EPISTLE TO THE
HEBREWS.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side.

* * * * *

"Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting, in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified."—LOWELL.

"Heard are the voices,
Heard are the sages,
The world's and the ages':
'Choose well, your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.'"—GOETHE

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”—**HEBREWS xi, 24–26.**

VIEWED in some aspects of his character and life-work, Moses might justly be regarded as the most illustrious of men. In some respects he is equaled, and even surpassed, by St. Paul; but in the breadth of his attainments and achievements, in the extent of his influence upon the institutions of civilized society, it is doubtful if any other man can take the crown of pre-eminence from the head of Moses. Others have shone with brilliant luster in their own age and nation; he is the master-spirit of all ages and of all nations. The character and credibility of Moses, as you are aware, have recently been violently attacked by a somewhat conspicuous lecturer, reports of whose flippant lectures on the “Mistakes of Moses” have been widely circulated in the secular press.* It does not come within the scope of my

* This discourse was delivered in the university when the lecture referred to was attracting attention and misleading many persons.

purpose to reply to these assaults, nor to attempt to vindicate the great statesman and lawgiver and author from the puny attacks of this petty trifler, whose chief object seems to be to amuse a thoughtless audience with cheap and vulgar jokes on solemn and sacred subjects. I will not consume your time nor insult your intelligence by any extended allusion to the statements of this erratic man. His vulgarity, ribaldry, and blasphemy ought to be a sufficient antidote, with all sensible people, against the virus of his blatant atheism. The man who deals in disgusting jests about God and religion is not to-day so dangerous to the community as he, who, under the illusive name of science, insinuates his atheistic materialism into unguarded minds.

But, aside from this lecturer's coarse and ribald jokes, his want of candor and his thorough ignorance or willful misrepresentation of facts must utterly destroy the influence of his allegations with all thoughtful people. The man who finds nothing but amusing blunders in the Mosaic account of creation, when the most distinguished scientists discover in it a remarkable harmony with the latest revelations of science; the man who makes merry over the ark resting on some fancied icy mountain-peak, when the Bible makes no such affirmation; the man who assigns the Pentateuch to a date about two hundred and fifty years before Christ, when every half-instructed scholar

knows that the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the Septuagint version, commenced about two hundred and eighty-four years before Christ, and there is abundant evidence that the most of the Old Testament existed centuries before this—in a word, the man who goes right on, making assertions in utter disregard of the facts of science and of history and of universal consciousness, can be regarded as only a literary juggler, seeking to fill his coffers at the expense of an ignorant populace. But the man who denounces Homer and Dante and Milton will hardly stir a ripple on the surface of thoughtful minds when he turns his wooden guns against the illustrious Hebrew leader—Moses.

The life of such a man as Moses is worthy of the profoundest study. But our limit will only permit us to point out the more marked features of his character—grander far and more enduring than any of Egypt's proud and lofty piles—and to indicate the secret springs whence its streams of influence flow over the wide earth, and on through the ages of time and eternity. These we shall discover in the history of his youth and early manhood, and especially in that decisive choice to which our text refers.

Moses was probably born in a little hut near by the banks of the Nile. The day of his birth was clouded with a terrible sorrow. A pitiless Pharaoh was on the throne of Egypt, who "remembered not Joseph," and oppressed the people of Israel.

They had so increased as to be a dreaded power ; and tyranny, then as ever, quaking before this growing element of liberty, decreed the slaughter of all the male children of the Hebrews. For three months this fair babe was concealed by his parents, Amram and Jochebed, in their humble abode. Further concealment was impossible, and the trial hour came. A little basket or boat was woven of rushes and papyrus, covered with bitumen, and then, after one fond, prolonged kiss, the weeping mother put the tender infant in the little ark, and prayerfully laid "it in the flags by the river's brink." Miriam, an elder sister of some twelve summers, stood afar off with her eye on the precious freight of the tide. Soon the daughter of the king came with her train of maids to bathe in the sacred Nile. How she *happened* to come just at that moment when the little rush basket met her eye—why she did not linger another half hour in bed, or why the current did not sweep the young Moses to some other point than just that where the princess came—you may learn when you read understandingly the book of Divine Providence.

"It chanced—eternal God that chance did guide."

Her eyes saw, and her womanly heart pitied, the little waif ; and she sent her attendants to rescue him from his perilous condition.

But what could she do with a Hebrew babe ? It was

the winsome Miriam who solved her doubt as she naïvely asked if the princess would like her to call a nurse for the child, and then bounded away happy, to call the mother, who, perchance, was toiling at her task, while the tears of maternal love were burning hotly on her cheeks.

The mother hastened to the place, and Pharaoh's daughter gave back to her charge her own loved child to be nursed and cared for with tenderness. How eagerly she folded the rescued child to her throbbing heart when she was fairly beyond the sight of the princess, and how many and fond the kisses imprinted on its cheek, can be readily imagined.

Thus, the child Moses, though the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, by a wise and wondrous Providence was placed under the watchful care of his own mother to be trained for his future mission. Well and faithfully did that mother fulfill the duties of her holy trust. The strange circumstances of his preservation must have awakened within her some presentiment of a future big with interest; and for that future, zealously and lovingly she sought to qualify him. What lessons would she teach him concerning the one true God—the God of their people Israel—of his dealings with their fathers the patriarchs, of Joseph and his marvelous history, of the promises concerning the future of this oppressed people—their deliverance, and the coming of Messiah, some day, to be their glorious King and Redeemer! Here, then, in that pious

mother's sacred teachings and hallowing influence, were laid the foundations of the exalted greatness which characterized his after years.

At what age he was taken from his Hebrew home to the court of Pharaoh we know not; but doubtless he remained in charge of his parents long enough to be thoroughly instructed in the principles of the Jewish religion, and to learn his real parentage, and the hopes that were entertained of his future services to his oppressed people.

At length he was removed to the court and educated as the son of the princess in all the learning of the Egyptians. Imagine him in this new sphere of life, the honored and petted child of royalty, living in a gorgeous palace, probably in the proud city of Heliopolis—then the center of Egypt's learning and glory. Kings and princes, the great and the wise men of the world, were his associates and teachers.

No pains were spared in his education, to make him a worthy successor to the throne. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that the most eminent instructors of Egypt were employed in his education; and Philo says that the greatest scholars of Greece and Assyria came to instruct him in the arts and sciences of their respective nations.

That he wisely improved these rare opportunities there can be no doubt. Many are the particulars recorded by historians, of his beauty of person, his clever

parts and deeds of prowess. It is related that he was made commander of the army, and distinguished himself by many signal victories. Sacred history informs us that he "was exceeding fair," that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

It was amid such scenes as these, in a proud, idolatrous court, with so much of fame and flattery to please the ear and poison the heart, and such a halo of personal glory encircling him as would naturally blind the eyes to higher good and beguile the feet from religion's path, that the youth and opening manhood of Moses were passed. How many of the young men of to-day would stand the strain thus put upon his character? It was well that the education of Moses began in the rude hut by the Nile, with his mother for his teacher, and not in the palace of Pharaoh, with the wisest of the world's philosophers for instructors. Let a true mother lay the foundation of character, and it will ordinarily stand the strain of many a fierce temptation. How often, think you, amid all this glitter and glory, did Moses think of his relationship to the despised Hebrew slaves, and of the lessons instilled into his youthful mind concerning them and their God—Jehovah? How many a struggle did that manly bosom know as he thought of duty and of destiny all along those years of life at court?

But at length the decisive hour came that sum-

moned him to make the final choice. Perhaps it was proposed, by some legal form or ceremony, that he should be publicly recognized as the "son of Pharaoh's daughter," and heir to the crown of Egypt. There was no more time for deliberation. Royalty with all its accompaniments of distinction must be publicly accepted or refused.

I fancy I see the princely Moses in this hour of trial and of triumph. Slowly and thoughtfully he ascends some eminence that overlooks the surrounding country. Great thoughts struggle in his mind. Great questions agitate his throbbing bosom. At his feet lies the fair city reflecting from dome and tower the golden beams of the setting sun. Proud temples glisten in the flashing light. The palace, with all its gorgeousness and splendor, meets his eye, inviting him to its costly treasures and its beguiling delights. Within, he sees the throne-room, and the waiting crown and scepter, holding out to him their coveted honors. His view embraces the rich lands of Egypt with their vast resources, and the "treasure-cities" with their untold wealth. All this shall be his—honor, power, wealth, pleasure—if he will acknowledge himself the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Yonder, on the public works and in the fields, toiling in their grime and sweat, bending beneath heavy burdens and smarting under cruel blows, he sees the hated and enslaved Israelites, his countrymen. His eye rests on the

wretched huts in which they live, and his heart sickens at the thought of their degradation and the apparent hopelessness of their elevation.

But standing there beneath the calm blue sky, on the threshold of a decision so pregnant with immeasurable results, he remembers what his mother early taught him concerning Jehovah, the God of this despised people; a strange, heavenly voice falls upon his ear and thrills his heart; visions of a triumphant future, and the rewards of the great hereafter, float with inspiring force before his mind. The heroic choice is made.

Let us consider what that choice involved; the principle that inspired it; the reward which followed it.

I. What did that important choice involve? how much of sacrifice and of self-renunciation?

Rank and royalty he thereby renounced—the highest honor and the greatest power that earth can give—the very prizes for which men toil most zealously and pay most largely. Yet, now that they are fairly within his grasp, he spurns them with deliberate choice. The story related by Josephus concerning the childhood of Moses, that when he was presented by the princess to her father as her adopted son, and the royal crown was put upon his head, he refused to wear it, and, dashing it away, trampled it under his feet, is virtually true of his later years. But it is not the freak of a fondled child. It is the well-pondered act of a matured judgment.

This decision also involved *the renunciation of temporal riches*. Egypt was at that time one of the wealthiest of monarchies—a vast treasure-house of riches. The “treasures of Egypt” were no slight temptation as they lay glistening in the sunlight of promise before this prince, who had lived amid the luxuries of a palace. Let any man measure, if he can, the influence which the desire for a competency of worldly good has upon himself, and he may better judge how strong was the power of Egypt’s incalculable wealth, which failed to swerve from his holy purpose the illustrious Hebrew, in that decisive hour of choice.

And there, too, were *the pleasures* of a life amid courtly splendors, which he voluntarily renounced. Within his reach were all the sensual enjoyments that the mind could devise or the heart desire. He could have lived in an atmosphere of earthly pleasure, breathing the perfume of sweetest flowers of delight, feasting the eye with all forms of beauty, regaling the senses with every carnal joy. And let it not be supposed that there *are* no pleasures in a life of sin. They err who thus affirm. The apostle distinctly declares that the choice with Moses was between suffering “affliction with the people of God” and *enjoying “the pleasures of sin for a season.”*

He does not say that sin itself is always bitter. Nay, the rather is it pleasant to the taste. There is a fascination in its illusion, a charm in its deceptive

sweets, a witching spell in its secret delights. O yes, sin is pleasurable, joy-giving, exhilarating. It is the "wages of sin" that is "death." But the tyrant master keeps the "wages" carefully concealed from the view of his deluded slave.

And it is this pleasurable-ness which gives to sin its power over men. They would not with such eagerness partake of this fruit were it bitter and nauseous. Now, as of old, it is because it is "pleasant to the taste" that the apple of sin is eaten by every son and daughter of Eve. And what the potent might of these pleasures of sin is, and how great the struggle needful to conquer it, there is no one that hears me who does not in some measure know.

All honor to Moses, then, for his signal victory over this fair-visaged and subtle foe, who has taken captive so many of earth's fairest sons, and led them by the silken bonds of a willing captivity to the bitter wages of death! And all honor and certain reward to every youth who, like Moses, will spurn the sinful pleasure, and choose the higher though hidden good!

But in that choice was involved more than the renunciation of all these forms of worldly good. With him, to *reject them*, was to *accept their opposites*; and not less luster is shed upon that decision by what he accepted than by what he renounced.

Think of that race of bondmen whom henceforth he was to call his brethren; taking his place by their

side, and sharing the reproach and hatred which belonged to them ; himself a prince, descending from the lofty position of royalty, cutting asunder every tie that bound him to his previous exalted station, and becoming the companion and brother of a despised and almost hopelessly degraded people. They were not only poor and enslaved, but ignorant, and, doubtless, in general, far more gross than the common people of the Egyptians. Slavery always degrades. It not only deprives men of their rights, but it robs them, in process of time, of the nobler qualities of a true manhood.

There, too, were the envy and ill-will of this very people he sought to benefit. They would not understand him. They were sure to misinterpret his good intentions. All this he must have foreseen. And how strikingly did the sequel prove its truth ! His very first endeavors in their behalf excited their hateful envy ; and this, possibly, as well as the fear of the king, drove him from them to the land of Midian. His whole intercourse with them for forty years in the wilderness was that of a magnanimous prince dealing with a degraded and querulous people, whose murmurings and bickerings were an incessant provocation.

It was with such a people that Moses deliberately chose so intimately to identify himself. Nor was there in his mind one thought that belongs to the ambitious demagogue seeking political preferment. No such motive influenced him as too often leads men

to adopt the cause of their suffering brothers. No earthly recompense did he expect or seek.

And not only was there the dishonor of becoming the companion of these degraded Hebrews; he accepted also the "reproach" which attached to the *worship of their God* and faith in their promised Messiah.

It was, as the apostle says, "the reproach of Christ" which Moses "esteemed greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." The God of the Hebrews was held in derision by these idolatrous Egyptians. And Moses chose all the odium that ever attaches to an unpopular religion, professed by a despised and ostracized class. His former associates among the lords and princes, the priests and the philosophers of Egypt would look upon him with contempt for adopting a religion so despised in their eyes. Think of this, O youth of this Christian land, where the true God is honored and worshiped by presidents and senators, by the learned and the great; where the Bible is the recognized rule of life, the Church the acknowledged light of the world, and the religion of Christ is admitted to be the one hope of humanity! And yet, you, perchance, hesitate to accept this honored boon, to adopt this revered faith, to choose this infinite good, through cowardly fear of a few godless associates.

Look on this princely reared son of fortune, turning away from rank and wealth, from honor and pleasure,

from friends and genial pursuits, to humiliation and poverty, to dishonor and reproach, to uncongenial associates and the curses of those he would bless; and summon your fainting heart to a like worthy choice.

Moses places on the scales of decision, on the one side the *world's best*, on the other *religion's worst*, and with deliberate judgment chooses the latter; "affliction with the people of God," "the reproach of Christ," outweighing a throne with its dazzling honors, the wealth of a proud monarchy, and the pleasures of a royal palace.

II. Turn we now to consider for a moment, upon what principle and by what inspiring motive such a choice was made. And here we are left in no doubt. The apostle solves the problem for us: "*By faith* Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Standing on that summit of observation he looked not alone with the eye of sense upon the inviting scene before him, but with the clear and penetrating eye of faith he surveyed the whole prospect. And when you look upon earth's most entrancing scenes with the eye of a clear-visioned faith, their beauty fades, their glory pales, their wealth vanishes, their pleasure dies.

He saw thus that all this fair-promising good was more seeming than real—a tinsel'd glory that would not withstand the corroding atmosphere of adversity and death—pleasing to the sense but not satisfying to

the heart. He believed in God, and believed that it was better to be the son of God than the son of a king; better to have God's friendship and approbation than the honors of a kingdom and the flatteries of earth's proudest nobles; better to share disgrace with God's people than to be lifted to the summit of glory among his enemies.

He saw by faith, also, that all this glitter and glamour of earthly treasures were but "for a season"—a flower of earth that blooms to-day and fades to-morrow; a summer's day that wanes and darkens into deepest night; a song of tremulous joy that ends in a wail of despair; a transitory pleasure that while it might make life agreeable would make a death-bed terrible. Ah, it were well for us all were we to remember, when earthly prospects charm and forbidden pleasures allure, that they are *but* "for a season!"

Moses' faith in God also gave him assurance that the promises concerning his people Israel should be fulfilled; that however degraded they were then, they should be exalted, and a Delivering Hand should wrest them from the oppressor's grasp.

Faith brought to his view far more than the natural eye could compass. It was to him "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Go forth, and look with naked eye over the limited field presented to your view, bounded by the sensible horizon, and the seemingly not-distant arch of heaven

shutting down upon it. Now place the *telescope* to your eye, and lo! the field of vision is enlarged, and *distant worlds appear*. *Faith* is such a telescope, and through this Moses looked. And it was this look which the apostle refers to when he says, "He had respect to," or, rather, he was "looking away" to, "the recompense of reward." That is the thought. He was "looking away." And what did he see? Fields more fair and fruitful than the fertile valley of the Nile; the river of life surpassing far the sacred stream of Egypt; riches infinitely transcending Egypt's garnered treasures; a crown more effulgent than that of the Pharaohs; a palace whose splendor outdazzled that of the magnificent City of the Sun.

And it was this faith-view of the invisible and the abiding that gave to Moses victory over the visible and the transitory. Thence he drew his inspiration. There, in constant intercourse with the unseen, were the springs that fed his nature and nourished his soul, and strengthened his massive character and made him the religious hero of the ages. "He endured as seeing him that is invisible."

Friends, there is but *one* way to conquer this world—and it *must be conquered*, or *it will conquer you*—and that way is to look from this, through the telescope of faith, to the other world. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." If you would be a winner in the life-race, you must

do as Moses did—take in the *whole* and not a *part* of life, sacrifice the present for the future, pleasure for principle, gold for godliness, wealth for worth, reputation for character, the blossoms of immediate promise for the golden fruits of the eternal years.

This choice of Moses has its impressive lesson for every one, and especially for the youths before me, in whose hearts the fires of ambition blaze, and the light of hope burns brightly, shining out afar on the untrodden path of life. For here, again, we are reminded of the oft-recurring fact that every one must make for himself a similar choice—a choice between the good that is seeming and the good that is real, between the pleasures of sin for “a season” and the joys of holiness forever.

The false and the true, wrong and right, time and eternity, earth and heaven, struggle for the mastery in every human soul. This fact is seen gleaming through the traditions of all countries. In the legends of the Mussulman, Mohammed is represented as standing on the mountain which overlooks Damascus. Fair and fairy-like is the scene before him—a garden of unearthly beauty—but he turns away from the view, exclaiming, “Man has but one paradise, and mine is fixed elsewhere.”

Happy will it be for you, young friend, if you crystallize this legend into a beautiful reality in your own history, and, turning away from the most inviting

scenes over which sin casts its illusive glamour, exclaim, "My paradise is fixed elsewhere."

How many a young man stands to-day with his eye on some captivating but forbidden pleasure! With him the choice is fairly shaped—a life of sin, or a life of virtue—which? How many stand with hesitating feet where the path of true religion begins. A voice divine calls them to walk in this narrow way, sunny or clouded, thorn-covered or rose-strewn. But *another* way, broader and more thronged, invites their waiting feet; and flowers and fruits of pleasure seem to hang blooming and blushing all along that inviting way.

Ah, if they could but see as Moses saw, that at the end of the "narrow way" stands the golden gate of life, glistens in the blazing light of heaven the Palace Beautiful, waits for them the King Eternal holding out the fadeless crown, they would not longer halt!

A sentence or two only can be given to the years of Moses' after-history. The visit to his oppressed brethren; the forty years of waiting and preparation amid the desert wilds of Arabia; the converse with God by the burning bush; the contest with Pharaoh and the triumphant issue; the leading of that vast multitude through the Red Sea, and for forty years more through the wilderness—all this I pass and ask you to consider for a moment,

III. *The reward of his illustrious choice.* He was rewarded by being called to a mission of most

distinguished service and resplendent honor. He sacrificed the honors which Egypt proffered him, and God gave him, in this life, honor beside which all the glory of Egypt fades, as the glimmering star in the light of the burning sun.

He became the leader and deliverer of God's chosen people—a lawgiver in comparison with whom the names of Solon and Lycurgus lose their brightness; an author of the most illustrious books the world has ever read; a prophet with a shining record of glory; a hero whose fame has filled the earth.

The honor that he renounced was but “for a season;” the honor that he gained is lasting as the years of God. Where now is Egypt with all her greatness and glory? Where is her garnered wealth? Her palaces and temples have crumbled to decay; the dust of her gods, Ammon and Ra and Osiris, mingles with that of their worshipers; the mummied forms of her princes—her Pharaohs and Ptolemies—stare at you with vacant gaze in the museums of earth. Her hundred-gated Thebes is desolate as the wilderness. Her lofty pyramids and solemn Sphynx alone remain, sad, dumb witnesses of her departed glory.

Had Moses chosen this portion how long would he have enjoyed it, and where now would be his heritage? Was it or was it not higher honor to be Moses, leader of God's hosts, than to be Pharaoh, king of the Egyptians?

So certainly is it always better even to "suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Nor was he less honored in his death than in his remarkable life. There is no grander scene recorded in human history than the triumphant departure of this man of God. A hundred and twenty eventful years of life are passed. His work is done. God bids him ascend the summit of Pisgah, and look out upon the land of earthly promise, whither his people shall go, but which *his* foot is never to tread. Did ever the world behold a scene like that? A son of humanity, smitten by no disease, with undimmed eye and unabated force, climbing the mountain to die, alone with God? There, on the rocky mount of vision, with no eye to behold but Jehovah's, this servant and friend of God yields his spirit to the divine Father, as a child throws himself into the waiting arms of an earthly parent.

But what of his body? Earth's heroes are often honored in their burial. Distinguished men lay them in their last resting-place. But never before nor since was a child of mortality laid in his grave by the hands of the infinite God. "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

“God made his grave, to men unknown,
Where Moab’s rocks a vale enfold,
And laid the aged seer alone,
To slumber while the world grows old.”

More than fifteen centuries pass. There is another scene of memorable interest unfolding before our gaze. Messiah has come, and with his three chosen disciples is on the Mount of Transfiguration. Suddenly he stands transfigured before his wondering disciples; his face shines as the sun, and his raiment is white as the light. And lo! there, stand with him, in shining garb, two eminent inhabitants of the other world engaged in holy converse!

And who are these chosen messengers from heaven commissioned by Jehovah to this honored service? Moses, the servant of God, and Elijah, the prophet of Horeb.

God still holds him in highest esteem, and sends him forth on grandest missions of honor.

And Christ, too, adds immortal renown to this name in his constant allusions to Moses, his great prototype. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Wherever Christ’s Gospel is preached, the name of Moses will be heard and honored.

And not through all the earth alone is this name known as the honored of the Lord. On rocky Patmos the apostle John saw a vision of heaven, with its vast

company of them that had "gotten the victory," who, in their ecstasy of triumph, swept their hands over the "harps of God." What is the song they sing? Listen! Ah, there is *one* name—the "name which is above every name," the name of Jesus—that is on the lips of every one in that victorious host, and rings out in sweetest accents in every song they sing. But there is another name which those redeemed ones love to honor. "They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." What! Is this he whom we saw accepting "affliction with the people of God," "reproach," and shame and dishonor? Yes; and his name is forever coupled with that of Jesus in the Gospel message and in the songs of heaven. Though *uncrowned* as ruler of a petty earthly kingdom, yet the myriad inhabitants of earth and heaven unite to put upon his head the crown of highest distinction, and hail him *king among men*.

Behold, then, the reward which follows the choice of wisdom. And you are called to-day to make this choice. On the one hand is the world with its sinful pleasures; on the other, the service of God. Make your choice with the self-surrender and the faith of Moses, and his covenant-keeping God shall be yours, to ennoble and to honor you with earth's best gifts and heaven's highest rewards.

DAVID :
FROM THE SHEEP-FOLD TO THE THRONE.

**"Love and courage are the spirit's wings, wafting to noble actions."
—GOETHE.**

**"Not in the clamor of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves, are triumph and defeat."—LONGFELLOW.**

"Quit you like men; be strong."—ST. PAUL.

"I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel."—1 CHRON. xvii. 7.

A CENTURY after the fall of Troy, and more than three centuries before the founding of Rome, a shepherd-boy was tending his flocks among the Judean hills, who was destined to fill a large place in the world's history. That youth, as yet unknown beyond his humble Bethlehem home, was David. The curtain rises and introduces us to the first scene in the changeful drama of his life, in the quiet little town of Bethlehem. His father, Jesse, is a Jewish elder and chief man in the village. David is the youngest of ten children, and on him fall the menial labor and contemptuous treatment which, in the East, are commonly the lot of the latest born. It is the occasion of a yearly sacrificial festival. The old and honored prophet Samuel surprises the villagers by suddenly appearing, driving a heifer before him, for sacrifice, and carrying in his hand a horn of anointing oil. He calls for Jesse's sons to pass before him. Eliab, the eldest, tall and kingly in his bearing, approaches, but Samuel has no

message or mission for him; seven sons of manly look appear and pass unhonored. "Are here all thy children?" says the prophet. "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep," replies the father. He is quickly sent for, by Samuel's command, and the prophet, moved by divine influence, pours the anointing oil upon his head, speaking probably some inspiring word in David's ear, and the mysterious ceremony is ended amid the wonder of all present. To none are the wonder and mystery greater than to David himself.

There he stands, the future king of Israel, chosen of God for a great destiny and a commanding position among men.

Look at him. He is a youth yet under twenty years of age, perhaps not over fifteen; his face is ruddy and fair; his hair, auburn; his eyes sparkle with peculiar brightness betokening a keen intellect; his form is not massive, nor is it diminutive, as is usually supposed, but it is compact and sinewy, capable of great endurance, combining the agility of the deer with the strength of the lion.

The ceremony over, with its mystic meaning faintly understood, the prophet departs, and David returns to his flocks in the fields.

With this spectacular scene begins a public history which fills a larger space in the Scripture records than that of any other character—a history embracing

greater vicissitudes and extremes of fortune than any other, and clothed with the interest of romance from first to last. To trace the successive steps of his eventful life, to analyze critically his many-sided character, to mark the effects of his acts upon society, and to note the many lessons of his career would require a volume. Such is not our present purpose, but rather to take a hasty glance at his life, especially at its earlier period, and to solve the question, if possible, as to the reason of his promotion and greatness.

How long he remained in the retirement of the Bethlehem pastures we know not, nor what events marked his daily life; one or two incidents only have come to our knowledge; when a bear and a lion had seized a lamb of his flock, the courageous lad, instead of running for safety, engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with the ferocious beasts, and by his valor and strength made them an easy conquest.

Another event soon makes the young shepherd a conspicuous figure before the eyes of all Israel. There is war between the Philistines and the Israelites. The two armies confront each other. They are encamped on the frontier-hills of Judea, a deep ravine separating them. Saul, king of Israel, commands the Israelite army; David's three eldest brothers are in the army, and David is sent by his father to carry to his brothers some loaves of bread and parched corn and

slices of milk-cheese. Approaching the camp he hears the well-known battle-shout, and his martial spirit is stirred within him. The champion of the Philistine army, for the fortieth time, now repeats his defiant challenge in contemptuous language and tones. The valiant shepherd-lad has the spirit both of patriotism and of piety within his manly breast, and, seeing the disheartening and humiliating condition of his people, a high purpose and a great inspiration seize him; he proposes to meet the vaunting challenger. Eliab, his eldest brother, angrily resents his proposal, and tauntingly suggests to him that he had better go back and look after those few sheep in the wilderness. But a great and brave spirit is not to be frowned or frightened out of a noble purpose. With Saul's approval David undertakes the gigantic task.

The scene is one of the most sublime and tragic in history or in romance. There stands the proud and boastful giant, a huge monster, furious with rage and trusting in his physical strength; and there on the other edge of the ravine stands the calm-browed, fair-haired youth in his shepherd's garb, with a simple sling in his hand, trusting in the "living God," whose servant he is and whose cause he defends. A single stone, hurled by that arm which for the moment combined, in its tensioned fibers, both human skill and divine power, sinking in Goliath's forehead, brings

the mailed champion to the ground, and David, seizing the massive sword of the fallen giant, and severing his head from his body, bears the two trophies away in triumph.

The Philistines fled in terror. Israel was victorious. The shepherd-youth of Bethlehem became a prominent actor on the national stage.

David was now probably about twenty years of age. He was soon called—or according to the chronology of some writers *recalled*—to Saul's court, because of his valor and musical ability, and became his armor-bearer, rising to the rank of captain of the king's body-guard. The king's daughter, Michal, was given to him in marriage as a reward for his services. But his distinction excited the envy of king Saul. The old king could not bear to hear the daughters of Israel singing as they did, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

The commonest and the meanest characteristic of human nature is envy. Few men are great and good enough to rise superior to it. It destroys the happiness and curses the lives of thousands. Its influence is subtle and deceptive; so base and detestable is it that no one will acknowledge, even to himself, that his bosom is the home of such a monster; so it pierces him with its fangs while he knows not what poisonous serpent stings him. His judgment is warped, his charity quenched, his spirit embittered, his peace of

mind destroyed, all because he has a hidden enemy in his own breast, in the envy secretly cherished, and fancies that he has a real enemy in the person who is the innocent cause of his wretchedness.

Such always is the deluded victim of envy, though he may be philosopher, preacher, professed saint, or infallible pope. Such was king Saul in his feelings toward David; an unhappy, selfish, splenetic old man, hating and persecuting his son-in-law, the young and generous-hearted David, who really loved him with a true affection, and was ready for any service or sacrifice in Saul's behalf. That cruel and causeless envy drove David a fugitive from his home and followed him with merciless persecution for ten full years.

We cannot dwell upon this wild, romantic period as of his life, though it is as full of interest as it is of adventure. Hunted by Saul and his forces, like a partridge on the mountains, driven from fastness to fastness, with many perils and hair-breadth escapes, David finds no rest for his weary feet, through all these adventurous years.

He is recognized by many as the probable successor to the throne, and Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, and heir-apparent to the crown, is David's most ardent friend, surrendering to him all claim to be king and is more than willing to be next to him in the kingdom. A band of adherents, devoted to David's interests, numbering sometimes six hundred strong, follow his

varying fortunes and fight for him with valor and devotion unsurpassed. Some of them are rough characters, not over scrupulous, and in financial distress or unpleasant relations with the government. David's experience with these men forms a valuable element in his qualifications for future work, and his marvelous control over them reveals the qualities of a leader and commander.

He first escapes from Saul's envious wrath by the aid of his wife Michal, who lets him down from a window, and skillfully conceals his departure. He flies to his old friend Samuel, the prophet, at Ramah, thence to Nob, where the Tabernacle was located, obtaining of Abimelech, the priest, bread for himself and for his hungry companions, and the sword of Goliath, kept as a trophy in that sacred repository.

He next takes refuge among his old enemies, the Philistines, and is received by Achish, king of Gath, at his court. His safety at length being imperiled there, he flees to the wild cave of Adullam, a rocky cavern not far from Bethlehem; here he is joined by his whole family, no longer safe from Saul's fury. Here, also, the band of outlaws attach themselves to him, and his independent life is fairly initiated. The rocky fortress of Herodium, or possibly that of Marsada, is next a refuge, and his aged parents are placed in care of their ancestral kinsman in Moab.

Now he is in the forest of Hareth; now protected

by Nahash, the Ammonite king ; now in the wilderness of Ziph and betrayed by the treacherous Ziphites into Saul's toils, from which he but just escapes ; now he makes a descent on the town of Keilah, and for the first time finds himself in possession of a fortified town, but is soon driven out by the approach of Saul ; and again, he is among his former enemies in Ziklag, on the frontier of Philistia, under the protection and in the service of Achish the king.

These scenes, to which we can give but this hasty glance, are of great importance, as entering into the experience and affecting the character of David. The events of this period are celebrated in many of the Psalms which he composed, either at this time or later in his life. The memory of these adventures, with their perils and deliverances, constitute an essential element in that incomparable thesaurus of sacred poetry, the Book of Psalms, which the world will never weary of reading.

At length tidings reach him of the fatal battle on the heights of Gilboa, in which both Saul and Jonathan are slain. With unaffected grief he receives the news of the death of his bitterest enemy, and gives vent to his emotions in one of the most pathetic and sublime strains of elegiac poetry contained in any language :

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places : how are the mighty fallen !

“Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

“Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings : for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

“From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

“Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided : they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

“Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights ; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

“How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle ! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

“How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !”

At last, free from the persecutions of his relentless enemy, David now inquires of the Lord what to do,

and is directed to go up to Hebron, the oldest town of Palestine, where rest until this day in their ancient sepulcher the mortal remains of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, with their wives. Here David is again anointed, and proclaimed king of Judah. For seven and a half years he reigns in Hebron. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, is made king of the northern kingdom of Israel. The two houses have their strong adherents, and there is prolonged war between "the house of Saul and the house of David." The latter conquers. The kingdom of Israel is united with that of Judah. Jerusalem, the stronghold, hitherto resisting all attacks, and held by the original occupants, the Jebusites, is now taken, and the seat of government is transferred to this more central and commanding position.

We have now hastily traced the rise of this shepherd-lad from the sheep-fold to the throne. David is thus presented to our thought as the type of youths rising from lowly to lofty positions, and rising by virtue of conditions and qualities essentially the same.

What are these conditions and qualities? What lifted David to this commanding height of greatness? What will lift your life out of the low level of "vulgar mediocrity" and belittling earthiness?

To say that God chose David and put this high honor on him does not at all answer the question.

Why did the divine choice fall on him rather than on ten thousand other young men of Israel?

God's choice of agents and bestowment of honors are not made capriciously, without ground of personal merit in the subject. This promotion and eminence of character and destiny are not the product of circumstances, nor of divine agency independent of human qualities and co-operation. It is our task and pleasure to study the *human elements*, to estimate the subjective factors in this problem of growth and greatness.

If we could rightly analyze and estimate all these forces and factors we should doubtless find that David was chosen to be king by the Divine Ruler because, considering all the interests involved, he was the best man in the whole nation for the position. And, inasmuch as the Israelitish people, with all their imperfection, were the most enlightened and advanced nation of the earth at that time, this man David stands before us as probably the best type of character which the world presented in his age, in any land, under any sky. This thought gives additional interest to the study of his character, and will help to settle some questions of the thoughtful mind as to why God should hold in such high esteem and use for such high purposes a man whose life was marred by such imperfections as David confessedly exhibited. We must never forget that the Divine Being, in seeking to

develop the race of sinful men by human agencies, employs such material as he has, selecting, indeed, for highest uses the noblest characters, which often, however, are far from being perfect. If he employs the imperfect and sinful it is because there are none perfect and sinless. He will, nevertheless, put greatest honor and most distinguished service on those most worthy and pure.

David was the "man after" God's "own heart," not absolutely, but because he was the *best of his nation and age* for the work he was called to do.

Let us attempt, then, a brief answer to the question started as to the qualities that gave him distinction.

First, then, there was in David a *substantial ground of personal worth, of susceptibilities and tendencies*, upon which to build a life of greatness. It is vain to deny the fact that there is a marked difference in youths in respect to their susceptibility to objective influences and teaching. The same instruction, the same surroundings, stir great thoughts, kindle high aspirations, in one mind, and leave another stolid and passionless as a clod. The Bible every-where recognizes this difference, and all its teachings accord with this fact. Some are "worthy"—not absolutely and independently good in themselves, but have a worthy basis of appreciation and receptivity which is a foundation on which to build future development. Some have no such receptive natures—"way-side" hearers

—to whose dull ears and unsusceptible hearts Truth makes her appeal in vain, and all instruction and effort are fruitless. There is nothing of good in this world, and nothing, I fear, in the next, for such as these. Do not let us flatter ourselves that great or good men are to come out of such material as this. Great sinners may become great saints, but there is a susceptible groundwork out of which the change is wrought. Neither college nor church, nor God himself, without changing the laws of our being, can make a noble man out of an intractable, unteachable, and inert youth.

David became great because the receptive soil of his nature took in the good seed, which God and angels and men are ever casting, by myriad agencies, on human hearts.

Nature taught him her sublime lessons. In his quiet shepherd-life he passed long days and nights communing with her "varied forms," listening to her solemn voices, drinking from her inspiring fount of wisdom. The stars whispered to him from their sentinel-posts, as he gazed upon their marshaled armies and emblazoned banners; the mountains awed him into reverence; the tempest thundered the Almighty's voice in his attentive ear.

He had a poetic nature, as have most pre-eminent men. Pragmatic and prosy men sometimes affect to disparage the poetic temperament. It is, however, an

almost inseparable part of the best type of character. Nearly every great preacher and orator and writer that moves the popular heart has the poetic fire kindled within. He may never have written a line of jingling rhyme; but he sees with the poet's eye, feels with the poet's delicate sensibilities, speaks or writes with the fervid passion and glowing imagination of the true and heaven-inspired poet. These true foundations of greatness, these susceptibilities and possibilities of a distinguished future, David possessed in marked degree.

But not every one who possesses these innate conditions of development uses them as did David, nor rises to approximate eminence.

There was in David also a combination of active qualities essential to the development of a strong character and to great achievements.

His life was *swayed by a great purpose*. All distinction centers in this; all flowering and fruitage of noble deeds spring from this one fruitful seed. It is the bane of multitudes that they have it not; know nothing of its marvelous power; are content to tread the path of sinful and slavish sordidness which the vulgar crowd are traveling. Two youths sit before me, side by side, equal, so far as human judgment can perceive, in talent and possibilities. In the breast of one burns a quenchless flame of purpose; in the bosom of the other no such fire warms and moves the sluggish

nature. This one distinction is enough to make the difference between success and failure—a life of honor and usefulness, and a life of mortification and shame.

Read the lives of the world's heroes, in sacred or in profane history—the commanding Moses, the intrepid Gideon, the stern Elijah, the courageous Daniel, the strong-spoken Baptist, the fiery Peter, the enthusiastic Paul, the impetuous Luther, the indefatigable Wesley, the bold Savonarola, the zealous St. Charles Borromeo, the compassionate Howard, the symmetrical Garfield, and many more, and of heroines an equally worthy band—every one was borne onward and lifted upward in a career of noble doing and daring by the omnipotence of an all-conquering purpose. In this illustrious band of God's noblemen, lifted above their fellows by greatness of purpose, we must give David a place. Humble though his lot, and as yet unheralded to the world, while he watched his flocks beside the solemn mountains and beneath the smiling stars, it cannot be doubted that great thoughts of duty and of destiny struggled in his mind, and that the power of an overmastering purpose bore him on through all the changeful periods of his eventful life.

To a great purpose was added *great courage*; the one the almost unfailling accompaniment of the other; the one controlling, the other stimulating, all the faculties of the soul; the one keeping steadily in view a regal life—be it with or without a crown—the other

urging on, in moments of hesitation, to valorous deeds. From his early shepherd-life to the close of his three-score and ten years, such courage was a marked feature in David's character. His daring feats while tending his flocks and defending them from beasts of prey, his martial exploits, aside from his contest with the giant Goliath, furnish abundant evidence of this element of a strong character.

But it is not to his physical prowess that we chiefly refer: that is not seldom found in the coarsest and commonest natures. The higher courage of a moral quality was also his in unwonted degree. It required courage to face the frowns and taunts of his envious brothers, and hold steadily to his high aims in spite of their disdain; it required courage for this humble volunteer to stand as the champion of the people of the "living God" under the suspicious eyes and scathing jests and questioning looks of soldiers of the regular army; it required courage to hold back his rough, hard-handed band of outlaws, and deter them from deeds of violence. It always requires courage of the highest quality to lift any life out of the crowded path of common servility to custom.

The one thing that most young people dare not do is to make their life a singular exception to a prevailing evil habit—to make a brave and persistent effort to "escape the average." Custom is the curse of fools, such fools as all of us by nature are; courage is

its cure. "Dare to throw off my yoke," says Society, "dare to leave the beaten path and cease to do as others do, and you are marked for social persecution." And this word is more imperious than the command of an emperor. Here is the arena for the display of courage for us all. You need not wait for the future's great occasions to test the presence or absence of this quality of every great soul in you. The test is being applied every day. The commonest duties and humblest walks of life reveal the true hero or the time-serving coward. The student is settling the question in his school-days, whether he is to be a courageous leader or a cowardly imitator. If he have not moral metal enough to utter a manly protest against the evil habits and traditional customs which are the snare and bane of college life, he need not dream of deserved distinction in legislative halls, or metropolitan pulpits, or judicial trials, or medical associations, or any other sphere in life. His history may be written up at once. Cowardly conformity to custom, cheap mediocrity, or sham popularity—that embraces it all.

If he have the courage that will face his companions and frown on every custom that smites character and belittles manhood—no matter with what heraldry surrounded and with what sophistry defended—he will cut his way to the front of life's heroes and win distinction in its fierce moral battles.

A few years ago there was a boy in the famous

English school at Eton who was brave in all manly sports, captain of the boats, a leader in the cricket match, but braver far, and in a higher sense, in his social intercourse with his school-fellows. There was among the students a demoralizing custom, fortified by time-honored tradition, as most evil customs are, of singing, on some special occasions, certain coarse songs.

This courageous youth, taking on himself all the contemptuous sneers of his comrades, declared that such songs should not be sung in his presence, and bravely left the room, under the storm of reproaches from his cowardly associates. The power of the vicious custom was broken, and from that day ceased. It is no surprise to find that boy in later years sacrificing his life as a martyr in resolutely fighting another wicked custom, that of kidnapping in the Southern seas. That martyred hero was Dr. Coleridge Patterson, Bishop of Melanesia, who surrendered his life in 1871. Well does Max Müller pay him a most tender and beautiful tribute of honor and esteem. The martyr spirit was in him when an Eton student, and no less bravely exhibited then than in his crowning act.

David was a courageous youth and a courageous king, and all who would follow him on the road to worth and distinction must imitate him in true valor.

He exhibited, also, through all these years of preparation and development *great fidelity to trusts imposed.*

I say *great fidelity*, not fidelity in *great things* merely. True fidelity consists in little faithfulnesses in the common and apparently petty details of daily life.

After that eventful day when the prophet anointed David for Israel's future king—a day which he could never forget, an event the significance of which could not be entirely unknown—it might have seemed an irksome task and a waste of time to drive his father's flocks a-field. Why not better that some one of his many brothers should attend to that menial work, one who had not such a distinguished future before him? No, there was never a word of that character and never a faltering in faithfulness to the humblest trust and lowliest duty. The sheep were always well cared for; the duty of errand-boy, carrying bread and cheese to his brothers in camp, was cheerfully undertaken. See that lad skipping over the hills, with his wallet slung over his shoulder, faithfully carrying his burden, doing his appointed work, though it seems a humble one, only that of bearing food to those who are expected to do the more distinguished deeds of fighting for their country and their God: little does he know that he is the real hero marching to his coronation, and that, ere another day dawns, his name will resound through the land as the deliverer of his country.

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” This is the universal law.

Through unswerving fidelity in the least and last of all life's duties do men march to the summit of distinction, and the victor's crown. The lesson faithfully learned, the task conscientiously done, the duty performed with rigorous exactness, every-where, always, this and this only will make a genuine hero or a true man. And this fidelity *will* make a hero, whatever be one's outward surroundings; for "God's heroes may be the world's helots."

One other element of David's character I must not fail to give prominent place, because it is the one pre-eminent characteristic of the youth and the man—*great faith in God*. His whole life, with one sad exception, exhibited a rare and distinguishing faith. It was the inspiration of his life, and offers the only explanation of its marvelous deeds. Take the inspiration of a transcendent faith from the contest with Goliath, and it becomes a piece of fool-hardiness unequaled in history. That simple shepherd-lad, fresh from his flocks, marching unattended and unarmed, save with his shepherd's staff and sling, to confront the colossal giant with his massive armor and unprecedented strength, is the sublimest audacity the world has ever seen. It is all clear, however, in the light of the Scripture record.

That Herculean monster of a Philistine is defying "the armies of the living God;" this shepherd-youth feels the fires of religious zeal flaming in his bosom,

hears the voice of Jehovah calling him to this perilous service, and with an unquestioning faith, whose sublimity is almost unparalleled, marches valorously to his task, saying, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." This inspiring faith in his God, as a loving, personal, omnipotent Helper, more than any other quality, more than all other qualities combined, made him the hero that he was; lifted him from the sheep-fold to the throne; nay, gave him a proud distinction among the world's illustrious noblemen, and enthroned him in the hearts of humanity, through all succeeding time.

And this same faith, in the same unchanging God, in proportion as we possess it, will lead us to great undertakings and raise us to summits of real power.

This high purpose, and lofty courage, and unswerving fidelity, and inspiring faith, were all fed and fired by habitual and genuine *religious devotion*. A pious youth, a devout soldier, a religious ruler, he drew his inspiration from communion with the Invisible, and became great in proportion as he obtained victory over the seen and the sensual. Amid the multiplied cares and harassments of a busy life he maintained his habits of devotion, and three times a day, in formal manner, offered his prayer to God, besides maintaining a constant habit of lifting up his "eyes to the" heavenly "hills," whence strength and victory

come. This was a secret of success in David's life, as it is in every life which feels its mighty stimulus and makes available the omnipotence of God.

Over a life ennobled by personal qualities like these, divine Providence presided, directing its paths, controlling its issues, and overruling all its events for highest and best results. Its trials were a discipline for future triumphs; its seeming defects were a preparation for greater victories; its early hardships, stepping-stones to higher honors.

Such ever is the life committed wholly to the guardianship of the living God and held steadily to his high service. All its issues shall be victorious; all its trials shall prove triumphs; all its losses shall result in gain; all its darkness end in brightest day.

Of David's forty years' successful reign; of his checkered and chastened life in later years; of his establishing and extending a kingdom that continued for nearly five centuries; of the many other qualities in his remarkable character; of his attainments and achievements as musician, author, warrior, ruler, religious leader and judge, I cannot now speak.

One dark sin stained the purity of this exalted character—a sin which no sophistry can excuse and no charity conceal. Though living in an age of great moral blindness and debasement; though a warrior, and familiar with rapine and blood; though mingling with men of depraved habits to whom he was, in the

main, incomparably superior ; though an Oriental monarch with unrestrained power, and adopting a practice common enough among such rulers, David's sin was, nevertheless, a most heinous offense, never extenuated by himself and should not be extenuated by us. There it stands, like a black, tempest-freighted cloud against a sunlit sky ; but over that cloud, fringing it with the light of hope, arches the rainbow of repentance, shedding its radiance over the sad and sorrowful scene.

Young friends, the conditions of growth and true greatness are before us in the portrait thus briefly sketched. The conditions are possible to you ; the real prize is certainly within your reach. Do not think I mock you when I say that the Divine Father has chosen you as well as David for a high and honored destiny. You may not sit upon a governmental throne, nor wear that gilded bauble which men call a crown, but you may be genuine kings and queens, living regal lives, wielding scepters of more than royal power. You may or may not ever have salute your ears,

“That applauding thunder . . .
Which men call fame ;”

but the greatness of an exalted character and the triumphs of a victorious life are surely yours, if you will pay the price of these transcendent guerdons.

Was David set apart for God's service by the holy, consecrating ceremony of his prophet ? So have

many of you been solemnly dedicated to the service of God by consecrating vows, by the sacred rite of baptism, by solemn prayers, rising often and fervently from parental hearts, at household altars and from secret places where no eye but God's could see and no ear but his could hear. I do not play with fancies nor jest with your immortal interests when I say that you, every one, no matter how cheaply you have held your life hitherto, how little you have esteemed its worth and privilege, how slightly used its opportunity—nay, more, no matter how basely you have abused its largess of mercy—nevertheless, you are called to “fellowship with the saints,” to companionship with earth's greatest and purest heroes, to a life of high aims, unsullied purity, and commanding power.

To such a life I summon you, with tender and impassioned earnestness, by the sacred call of Heaven which is upon you ; by the solemn, consecrating rite of God's ministers ; by the vows and prayers, the pleadings and tears, of pious parents, yet lingering on earth to bless you with their counsel, or looking down from heaven to follow you with their spirit ministries ; by the voice of conscience ; by the sublime possibilities of a life well-spent and the certain fate of a life mis-spent ; by the powers within you and the promise before you and the perils around you—by all these voices, human and divine, by all these appeals from earth and heaven and hell, I summon you to such a worthy life.

ABSALOM
THE FAST YOUNG MAN.

**"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled
with their own devices."—PROVERBS.**

**"He is given
To sports and wildness and much company."
—SHAKESPEARE.**

**"Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool."—TENNYSON.**

"Is the young man Absalom safe?"—2 SAMUEL xviii, 29.

THIS young man Absalom, concerning whom the distressed father puts this anxious inquiry, is not a model for the imitation of the young men of to-day. The study of his history and character will not afford us the pleasure which we derived in following the fortunes and contemplating the virtues of the pure-minded Joseph. But if the task be less agreeable it may not be less instructive; we may learn not less from one whose example is to be shunned than from him whose life is a pattern of goodness. Let us go back some three thousand years and place distinctly before us, in the clear outlines of a real personage, the character of this wayward young man. Thus we shall be able to see him living and moving before us and learn some lessons well worth the learning. The story of his life must be briefly told. It is with the study of his character and the lessons of his career that we have most to do.

I. Absalom was the third son of David. His father was a king, and the vista of life down which his

young eyes looked was as bright with the radiance of hope, as richly hung with the fruits of promise, as ever opened to the eager gaze of aspiring youth.

Possessing rare personal beauty, petted and fondled by indulgent parents, he walked up the sunny path of early youth to young manhood, plucking the tempting fruit of desire which hung in such luxuriant growth about him, and eating to the full. He was not wholly bad, but one of those thoughtless, reckless young men, not seldom met with in modern days, who are not over scrupulous about their habits, and lead a kind of free and easy life. He had a chivalrous spirit of honor which you do not find it easy to condemn. He indignantly resented the dishonoring of his twin-sister, Tamar, by his half-brother, Amnon, and gratified his burning revenge by murdering the guilty brother. Law was nothing to him. He was a law to himself. He was not the man to brook an insult or to be crossed. Self-gratification was the rule of his life. Does it require prophetic vision to foresee what this would bring him to? When a young man, pampered by self-indulgence, fired with the hot blood of youth, inflated with a sense of his own importance, casts off the restraints of law and religion, who does not know how certain will be his ruin? For this flagrant violation of the law, Absalom was compelled to flee the kingdom and to seek a refuge with his grandfather, Talmai, who was king of Geshur. Here he remained

in exile for three years; for David, his father, as the ruler of the land, dared not disregard the laws which it was his duty to execute, though his paternal heart fondly yearned toward his guilty son. But Absalom was a favorite in the kingdom, and Joab, David's prime-minister, succeeded by artful strategy in obtaining the king's consent to the young prince's return to Jerusalem. Yet David did not venture to receive him to the court, and for two years he resided in his own house, without seeing his father's face.

Absalom can ill brook such neglect as this. He is no penitent, with smitten heart, crying, as did his father, under the conscious burden of guilt, for the forgiveness of his sin. He is rather plotting to free himself from this galling yoke of dishonor. He desires an interview with Joab that he may secure his services in bringing about a reconciliation with his father. A young man of his stamp is never at a loss for means to compass his ends. If there is no right way to the end desired, there is always a wrong way. Joab's barley-fields are near at hand. Absalom orders his servants to set fire to them. This has the purposed effect and brings the influential councilor into his presence. Absalom implores Joab to use his influence in restoring him to the favor of the king, and re-establishing him in his forfeited privileges. His object is accomplished. Joab intercedes with David. Absalom is brought before that father whose face he had

not seen for five years. The old man grants him a full pardon, sealing it with a kiss of reconciliation. Absalom is again the object of his undisguised love, receiving many tokens of his favor—an honored prince in the king's court.

But how does the young restored criminal requite these unmerited favors? Does he show his gratitude by filial affection and by kind offices to his aged father? Not he, the ungrateful fratricide! No sooner is he established in his new relations than he begins to plot for the throne. No right and no relationship is sacred to him. Property, honor, life, are but as dry stubble before the raging fire of his selfish ambition.

Behold this ingrate son intriguing against his father's kingdom and stealing the hearts of the people from their lawful sovereign. He knows how to play the demagogue. He is a smart young man, as the world has it, and his clever parts are all devoted to consummately selfish ends. His father's kingdom is now large and the duties of the kingly office are many and onerous. David is not only king, but judge. Innumerable cases, of appeal, at least, are constantly demanding his attention, and there must of necessity be some delay and dissatisfaction. Besides, he has not the vigor and strength of his younger days, and already bends under the infirmities of age. The wily son, Absalom, perceives this state of things, and

with all the cunning trickery of a modern politician gives himself to the task of supplanting the old man on the throne. He takes his place at the gate of the palace, and when the men of Judea come up from various parts of the country to seek justice at the king's court, he questions each as to his cause; tells him it is right and good, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear him; and then, with an affected disinterestedness, that strikingly reminds one of some of the political philanthropists of our day, exclaims, "O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"

Then, too, Absalom affected a profound regard for the common people. When any one of this class approached him, Absalom smiled blandly, bowed graciously, and saluted him with a kiss.

Ah, how he loved the lower classes! It is marvelous what a race of successors in this line of reform Absalom has left behind him. In Roman history we have, among others, an instance of like conduct in Salvius Otho, whom a historian terms the Roman Absalom. But who shall number the American Absaloms whose love for the dear people finds expression in smiles and bows and pompous words, high-sounding with the promises of a pseudo-philanthropy?

Thus does this sycophantic hypocrite sow the seeds of rebellion. And when the plot is fully ripe Absa-

lom leaves Jerusalem under a false pretext and goes to Hebron, twenty miles away, where his insurgent followers meet him and proclaim him king. The sad intelligence soon reaches David in his palace. He is compelled to flee from his throne, and, accompanied by a faithful band of adherents, hastily marches out of the city, while Absalom with his forces enters Jerusalem and takes possession of the royal palace.

It is a touching sight, which may well moisten the eye of pity—the old king, surrounded by the members of his household, his officers and servants, sadly wending his way down Mount Zion, across the valley of the Kedron. See the white-haired, broken-hearted father, as with bare feet and head covered, to hide his grief, while burning tears roll down his furrowed cheeks, he slowly climbs the rocky steep of Mount Olivet. The summit reached, he turns his tearful eyes toward the Holy City, from which he is now fleeing as an exile, and remembers, with fresh outbursts of grief, that a rebellious son reigns in yonder palace, so recently his happy home. He is drinking now from the cup of bitterness which many a parent's lips have pressed, that sorrow—the saddest of all human sorrows—which springs from the unnatural conduct of a heartless son.

But Absalom thought not of his sorrow-smitten father, and would have pressed on at once to effect the destruction of the banished king and his adherents

were it not that the counsel of Hushai held him back until he could gather a larger force about him.

David, meanwhile, pushed on his little army across the Jordan, as far as Mahanaim—a city among the mountains of Gilead—where, refreshed and re-enforced, he prepared to meet the insurgents. Absalom followed with his army, in command of his cousin Amasa. The decisive battle was fought in the wood of Ephraim. Twenty thousand men fell upon the field. Absalom, though no soldier, was yet in the fight. He “rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.”

Joab, who was in command of the king's forces, was told of his plight, and hastening to the spot—contrary to the command of the indulgent David, who had given orders to spare Absalom—thrust him through the heart with three darts, and ordered ten young men to complete the deadly work. “And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him.” Thus ingloriously ended the history of this unprincipled young man. The fond father poured out a pitiful lament over his untimely end; but few are the tears which humanity will shed over the grave of such an unnatural son. The Jews to this day cast a stone at his tomb, which stands in the valley of

Jehoshaphat, to express their indignation at his heartless conduct.

And this, my young friends, is the type of a character which in our day has but too many a representative, called, in popular parlance, "The Fast Young Man." Not, indeed, that this character among us always has all the bad qualities of the infamous Absalom. Not, by any means, that he always is to be found in the same plane of society. He may be a prince or a newsboy, the son of a millionaire or of a scavenger, flattered or cursed by society: the spirit that animates him is every-where and always the same. And that spirit, whatever be its outward exhibition, is identical with that of the ignoble Absalom.

II. Let us now analyze a little more closely the character of this young man, that we may discover and shun its antitype which is found to-day in the various circles of society. Here, in the first place, we find a *supreme self-conceit* which renders him impatient of restraint. His own head is for him the one fountain of wisdom, his own foolish heart the one counselor he seeks, his own hot blood the one impelling force of his life. What cares he for his elders? He is wiser than they. Of reverence he is guiltless. No man or institution has any sacredness for him. All that has gone before belongs to the "old fogysm" of the foolish past. He is the son of a wiser and faster age. Do not try to bind about him any of these

swaddling-bands of infancy. As little does he care for law as the Bedouin of the desert. His brother has committed a wrong; he shall pay the forfeiture of his own life. Joab does not come to his house as he desires; his burning barley-fields shall bring him to terms. Such precisely is the fast young man of to-day. A young Samson, snapping asunder the withes of old forms and restraints which would bind him to an orderly life—a law unto himself—he stalks forth into society with the freedom of an outlaw, to prey upon its priceless treasures. Not such, young man, is the way to a successful life. It is not the path of license, but of law, that leads to loftiest heights of being; it is not freedom, but restraint, that shall bring you highest good. God has surrounded our path with cherubim of law, and sends restraining angels to attend us.

Look at another characteristic of this young Absalom, and of nearly every other fast young man—*his utter want of filial affection and regard*. How fondly that father loved him and doted on him! How basely the heartless son requited the parent's love! What must have been the quality of that heart which could resist such love, and pierce the bosom of an affectionate father through and through with pangs of grief, a hundred-fold worse than death? Yet how many a young man to-day is thrusting the darts of keenest sorrow through the hearts of loving parents, by disregarding their godly wishes, and spurning their

counsels and their prayers! When I see a young man who treats slightly the parents to whose tender care he owes his all of present good or future hope, who spurns his father's advice and heeds not the entreaties of his mother, I see another fast young man whose end is as certain as the laws of moral husbandry are invariable. I hear a voice saying, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

Extravagance is another feature of the character I am delineating. David was not a man of show. Little did he care for the gilded trappings of royalty. You might have seen him walking about among his subjects in Jerusalem without guard or attendant. But this young sprig of royalty, who is living on the old man's money, keeps his dashing turn-out, and rides through the streets of the city attended by fifty outrunners. His old foggy father may go on, if he chooses, in his plain, quiet way of living, singing his psalms and offering his prayers, and attending to all the duties of a religious life; but as for Absalom, he is bound to make a dash and cut a figure in society.

That is the fast young man of to-day exactly. He is the showy young man of the street. He drives a fast team if he can get one, and he would rather drive it on Sunday than on any other day. He makes a sensation, if possible, and attracts attention to himself as a brilliant, dashing young man. It costs money. But what is money to him? Some doting father foots the

bills ; or, may be, the till of his employer is the bank on which he draws ; or he takes a hand at stock-gambling, pocketing his gains and repudiating his losses ; or, failing in these and other resources, he writes another man's name on a bit of paper, and gets the cash at the bank. In one way or another the extravagant style of living must be supported, no matter what ruin and disgrace follow in its train. Young man, beware of the company of such, and covet not the brilliant equipage and costly attire of the fast young man.

Observe *the utter unscrupulousness, the entire want of moral principle*, which marks the conduct of this hot-headed youth. He has an aspiring nature, and is ambitious to rise to high honor and power. A true ambition is a noble element in the character of a young man. Held in due restraint, and regulated by pure principles, it is a motive power that impels to illustrious deeds, and lifts the life above the sordid plane where the ignoble are content to throng. But a *false* ambition, that aspires to self-aggrandizement regardless of the rights and interests of others, is the base quality of a small soul, and will work its own destruction. It is a Vesuvian fire within the bosom, whose certain eruption will spread Pompeian desolation over the fertilest vineyards and fairest fields of life's fond hopes.

Such was the ambition of Absalom. He wished to sit upon the throne, and he scrupled not at the use of

any means to gratify this unhallowed desire. The basest treachery, the most shameless sycophancy, the most heartless ingratitude toward an affectionate father—all this was the price he paid to secure his ends. This fiendish spirit took possession of the soul, and with its hot and poisonous breath blasted every lovely quality and banished every worthy aspiration.

When a man sets his heart on any unlawful prize, or when to secure any lawful end he stoops to illegitimate means, sacrificing honor and truth and conscience, and the sacred rights of his brother man, let him remember Absalom, and beware, lest, sowing "the wind," he reap "the whirlwind."

III. But it is worth our while to study the inducing causes of this most ungracious character, and look at the surroundings under which it was developed to such ripeness of evil. Thus shall we learn our most profitable lesson of warning from the contemplation of our present subject. We must not forget that character is always largely the product of causes and influences within the power of the individual himself, or his guardians and teachers. Do we ask what made this young man what he was? What were the influences about him from which he grew to such stature in sin? Let us see.

And first we are reminded that Absalom *was born into a condition of affluence*. The son of a king, with money enough at his command, he grew up surround-

ed by the luxuries which ample wealth furnishes, and never knew the healthful discipline of want, never felt the mighty incitements of necessity, never experienced the true independence which personal effort inspires. With all the benefits which wealth and station confer, with all the advantages which they place within the reach of the young man who will avail himself of them, we may not blind our eyes to the fact that one of the most perilous conditions in which any youth may be placed is that of abundant wealth and its attendant influences. It is so likely to foster pride and self-conceit, to prevent all manly effort, to induce self-indulgence and dissipation, to pamper the body and corrupt the soul, as to constitute it a peril against which no young man thus circumstanced can too strictly guard himself. The fast young man *may* be, and not seldom *is*, the son of poverty; but he is too often the petted son of wealth, the favored heir of fortune, as was Absalom.

There can be no question, also, that *the early moral and religious culture of Absalom was sadly neglected*. His father, David, was, indeed, a man of distinguished piety, and doubtless gave him much godly counsel. But he was a busy man, as fathers usually are, and found too little time for the religious training of his children. The cares of a kingdom, the onerous duties of a judge and ruler, together with the time devoted to authorship, consumed his working hours, as multiplied labors engross

the fathers of to-day. I would it were not so ; and I do not design to exonerate the fathers from responsibility when I state this simple fact ; but it *is* the fact that *upon the mother* rests the burden—justly or unjustly—of imparting religious instruction to the children of the household. And if she fail in this holy service the failure is too often fatal. In the case of Absalom, the mother, unhappily, was the daughter of a heathen king. You may blame David for marrying such a woman as Maacah, but that does not affect the fact that he *did* marry her, and that she was the mother of Absalom, and that the child's future destiny was largely committed to her hands.

It is a sad thing for a child to grow up without feeling the pressure of a mother's warm hand of blessing on his head, as she offers her fervent prayer to heaven in his behalf and bedews his cheeks with the tears of maternal love. It is a sad thing never to have learned from the lips of a Christian mother to lisp, "Our Father who art in heaven."

It is a sad thing for a young man to go out into the fierce struggle of life, to battle with its temptations, unfortified by religious principles, deeply planted in the heart by a pious mother's loving care. I trust there are no such youths before me. *You* remember that godly mother : the pressure of that gentle hand upon your brow you even now can almost feel ; the warm tear-drop seems still burning on your cheek,

and the tremulous words of prayer are still sounding in your ear. If you are wayward or wicked it is in spite of a mother's hallowed influence and holy teachings. But there are many, I fear, even in this Christian land, who, like Absalom, grow up to run the quick and sad career of a fast young man without the restraining influences of a godly mother's example and instruction.

Among the causes which conspired to render this young man's character so infamous we must not fail to mention, also, *parental indulgence*. David, with all his virtues, was an over-fond father. The young Absalom was never subjected to the rigorous discipline, the restraints, the self-denial, and self-government essential to the foundation of a strong and virtuous character. Thus, this petted child was nursed in the lap of indulgence, accustomed to his own way, while his loving father was almost blind to his faults, until the very last. See that stricken father, driven from his throne by an ingrate son, sitting at the gate of the city of Mahanaim, crying in the ears of his officers as they go forth to battle with the noble youth, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man." Better far had it been, for father and son, if that gentleness of parental love had always been mingled with *wholesome severity of discipline*. But David reaped at length the bitter fruits of unwise indulgence, as every parent will.

Another fact concerning the subject of our study

deserves a moment's reflection. "There was none to be so much praised as Absalom *for his beauty*;" and praised he doubtless was by thoughtless parents and friends, until he became inordinately vain of his personal beauty. It is dangerous for a young person to be endowed with rare physical beauty, lest he be proud of that which adds nothing to his worth. Nature sometimes spends all her strength in adorning the body, leaving little beauty or excellence for the mind. Absalom was probably content, as many another is, with a beautiful face, though the soul bore the marks of woeful deformity. He was an exquisite in dress. That elegant head of hair which he cultivated so assiduously must have occupied many of his precious hours. He thought more of his golden locks than of golden thoughts—more of his dress than of his deathless destiny. And therein he resembles the fast young man of our time, who knows incalculably more about the barber and the tailor, the latest fashion and the last "hop," the prettiest young lady and the richest old father, the coming wedding and the approaching horse-race, than he does of literature or business, morals or religion.

We must not linger on this too fruitful theme. Add to the character thus hastily sketched the influence of the club-room, the gaming-table, the theater, the social glass, the midnight revel, and the gilded house of death, and you have the full portrait

of the fast young man, who, unless arrested by the hand of Divine Power, will soon run his short race and terminate his career, if not in similar manner, yet as fatally as did Absalom, the rebellious son of David.

“Is the young man safe?”—the young man of our schools and colleges; the young man of our free, fair country; the young man of our rich and crowded cities; the young man of our own loved homes? *Is he safe?*

O, how many an anxious parent's heart throbs and thrills as this question trembles on the lips of love! That smitten king, with hoary head and aching heart, sitting at the gate of the city, in breathless anxiety awaiting tidings from the battle, and when the panting messenger approaches breaking out in the eager inquiry, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” is but the type of many another parent whose heart is breaking in its anxious love for a wayward son. I have known many a mother to sit and watch and wait, with trembling heart and tearful eye, far through the weary hours of night, listening for the foot-fall of the son of her love, and refusing to press her pillow until she saw him safe within the door of his own home. How eagerly she looked into the face of the late-comer! How anxiously she sought for any word or tone or look or sign that would answer the question which lay so heavily on her aching heart, “Is he safe?” And I have seen a picture as sad as that of

the anguished David, when he went into that little chamber in the tower over the gate, and burst forth into that bitter, wailing cry of grief, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!"

How sadder than every other grief of life to see the child of your love pressing eagerly the way to death! God pity and strengthen the parents; God bless and save the sons whom I now address; and may neither have occasion to lament the errors of a misspent life!

And now, O young man, I lay this question on your conscience: *Are you safe?* While snares and pitfalls crowd your path, while the syren voices of sin charm your ear, while the wrecked hopes and ruined hearts of thousands of once promising youth utter their warning notes, tell me, Are you safe? Not unless your feet are planted on the Rock of Ages; not unless you have fled for safety to the waiting arms of the Almighty Friend; not unless

"The eternal God is *thy* refuge and
Underneath are the everlasting arms."

And if not thus secure, flee now, at once, to this safe Hiding-place. Grasp the proffered hand of Christ, and tread the dangerous path of life hand in hand with this best of friends.

SOLOMON
THE BRILLIANT FAILURE.

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord."—JEREMIAH.

**"What signifies to man that he from heaven
His soul derives, that with erected front
He walks sublime, and views the starry skies,
If like the brutes irrational he acts!"—OVID.**

"Surely none can think without horror on that man's condition who has been more wicked in proportion as he had more means of excelling in virtue, and used the light imparted from heaven only to embellish folly."—JOHNSON.

"Solomon in all his glory."—MATTHEW vi, 29.

"Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord."—1 KINGS xi, 6.

ONE cannot fail to observe the wonderful diversity of character portrayed in the Scriptures. Here are heroes and martyrs, warriors and civilians, statesmen and poets, characters lofty and lowly, strong and weak, secular and saintly. Yet this very diversity is evidence of the faithfulness of the portraiture. Had all the characters of the Bible shone with a divine radiance, we should have questioned the truthfulness of the record. As it is we see in them all evident touches of human nature. They represent humanity through all the ages. Hence every Scripture character is rich in instructive lessons. Their weaknesses and follies, their strange contrasts and inconsistencies, teach us not less valuable lessons than their worthier traits.

The character of Solomon is unique—one of the loftiest and saddest of the sacred volume. Grand in its stately strength and towering height—sad in its demoralization and fall. A morning fair and bright as ever dawned on mortal vision—high noon golden

and glowing, flashing its glories far and wide—an evening clouded and mournful, with wailing winds and muttering thunders. Is it not the type of many another life? Has it not a voice of wisdom for us? Let us sit before this portrait, study its features, apply its lessons, and grow stronger and wiser the while.

Let us first take a rapid glance at the historic outline of Solomon's life. He was the latest-born son of David and Bathsheba—"tender, and only-beloved in the sight of his mother." Born a prince, the object of special parental affection, a beautiful and promising child, his education was doubtless the best that could be secured. Nathan, the prophet, was his special preceptor, but unquestionably the wisest teachers of Jerusalem were his instructors. Yet it is probable that his education amid courtly splendors developed intellectual activity and the poetic sentiment, rather than the robustness of character which marks many of the stalwart heroes of the Old Testament. True education will ever seek to put a sinewy strength into the character.

At the age of ten or eleven years Solomon witnessed the revolt of his brother, Absalom, after whose tragic death he was regarded as heir to the throne. There was, however, another older brother, Adonijah; but David, who was greatly under the influence of Bathsheba, had secretly sworn to her that her favorite son, Solomon, should be king. David was now old

and feeble, the throne would soon be vacant, and Adonijah plotted to seize it by a *coup d'état*. Absalom's revolt was re-enacted with less success. Abiathar, the priest, and Joab, David's chief general and trusted friend, with many of the king's servants, were in league with Adonijah.

A speedy blow must be struck to save the throne to Solomon. Nathan and Bathsheba hasten to the feeble David, urge upon him his oath, and measures are at once taken to put the crown on Solomon's head. The young prince is placed on the royal mule and, with his supporters, hastens to Gihon, where he is anointed king by Zadok, the younger chief priest. The loud trumpet-blast peals out the announcement to the assembled concourse, who send back the shout, "Long live King Solomon!" He is borne in triumph to the palace, seated on the royal throne, and receives the benediction of his father, David. This sudden enthroning of Solomon strikes dismay into the hearts of the conspirators. Adonijah flees to the sacred altar on Gibeon for protection, and is spared only to perish without mercy a little later. Abiathar is deposed and disgraced, and Joab, the white-haired hero of a hundred battles, is slain by his former comrade, Beniahah, while yet his hands clasp the consecrated altar.

Every enemy was now removed, and Solomon was "established," according to promise, on the throne of his father, David. He was at that time probably

about nineteen or twenty years of age—a lofty position and great responsibility for such a youth. Let us see how he met the demands of the situation.

Among his first acts was one eminently religious—respecting the worship of the true God. The ancient Tabernacle stood on the heights of Gibeon, some six miles north-west of Jerusalem. Thither repaired the young Solomon on a sacred pilgrimage, attended by a vast retinue of dignitaries, and offered, as a royal sacrifice, a thousand victims to signalize his accession to the throne.

It is well thus to honor God and inaugurate every new and important era in life—the assumption of new duties and relations—by some special offering or act of consecration to the Father above.

God was pleased with this evidence of Solomon's piety.

We now come to the most important act of his life—the great test of his character which affords evidence of his superior qualities. The night after his sacrificial offering God appeared to him, and the solemn voice said, “Ask what I shall give thee.” What a moment of thrilling interest was that! A young, ambitious king in the very presence of Jehovah—a voice divine proffering him whatever gift his heart should crave—the hand omnipotent extended to grant his utmost desire. What visions of glory must have passed before his mind in that supreme moment

of decision ! What forms, beautiful and smiling, stood before him pointing out the gleaming path of promised good ! But none of these forms of beauty or visions of golden hope throw the spell of their fascination over his mind in that crisis hour. He asks not Honor's fairest crown, nor Pleasure's most enchanting gifts, nor Fortune's amplest favors, nor life prolonged through ever fresh and happy years—but he does ask the transcendent gift of Wisdom. He recognizes the duties and responsibilities of his high position. He remembers the mercy of that God who has thus exalted him. He is conscious of his own weakness. What humility he exhibits ! “I am but a little child : I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people. . . . Give thy servant an understanding heart.” Wisdom and an “understanding heart,” qualifications for his station—character, and not any external good, is the choice of this young man of rare endowments. And this view of himself and his greatest need is the more notable because of his age, about twenty—the very period when we are wont to be most presumptuous and self-confident ; jealous of a greatness not yet assured to us ; impatient of counsel, untractable, and swayed by passion and impulse. This remarkable choice of Solomon puts on him the stamp of nobility.

Throw upon this scene the color of reality by making it your own. Imagine yourself face to face with

God, while the same solemn voice lays upon your heart the decision of your destiny, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." Would such a privilege prove a boon or bane? Would your choice lift you to companionship with the noblest sons of God or sink you to fellowship with the basest slaves of earth? What am I saying? Such a decision *is* in fact laid upon every one of you. And the choice is being made. If it be not expressed in words, it is crystalized into acts. As in fabled story two maidens came to Hercules while in his youth—the one, Pleasure, fair and winsome; the other, Virtue, modest and unadorned—and solicited his company through life; so now, young friends, there come to you the same forms, and in your ear rings the voice of each, saying, "Follow me."

How was this choice of Solomon honored by God? It pleased him much that this youth had so wisely made the choice of Wisdom, and he gave him that which he had asked—such wisdom as had never before distinguished the mind of mortal; and because he had chosen this higher good, God added thereto the lesser gifts of riches and honor and length of days. Let it be remembered that the matchless wisdom Solomon henceforth exhibits is the special gift of God.

And is this marvelous Fountain of understanding accessible to you, young men of lofty aspirations and hopes? Does this same beneficent Being proffer you

the gift divine and priceless? Ay, to *you* the Voice cries, "Ask, and it shall be given you." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally." God looks with favor on a praying youth whose heart, distrustful of itself, cries in the Father's ear for help and guidance; and heaven drops its highest benisons on his path. It is related in an Arabic legend that because Solomon, in one of his marches, halted at the hour of prayer, instead of riding on with his horsemen, God gave him the winds as a chariot, and the birds flew over him as a perpetual canopy. Young man, if you will pause in the march of life to offer daily to God the prayer of a yearning, trusting heart, the winds of God shall be your chariot; the providence of God, your protecting canopy; the angels of God, your ministering servants.

Let us now hastily follow this youthful king, with the crown of wisdom on his brow, through his brilliant reign. He returns to Jerusalem and commences a series of acts that extend his dominion and establish his kingdom on a scale of grandeur dazzling and unparalleled.

He inaugurates a foreign policy before unknown. Alliances are formed with the kings of Egypt and of Tyre. He creates a commerce, and in those early days—a thousand years before the coming of Christ—sends his ships plowing through the Indian Ocean to far off Ophir in the East, on the shores of India or Arabia. They come back freighted with gold and

silver, fragrant woods and spices, ivory and specimens of natural history. His empire stretches from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, from the foot of Lebanon to the desert bordering on Egypt.

At home peace and plenty pour their amplest blessings over all the land. It is the golden age of Israel. Solomon adorns and beautifies Jerusalem, making it indeed "the joy of the whole earth."

The grandest of all his kingly acts was the building of the Temple—the wonder and admiration of the world. From the forest of Lebanon and the quarries of Bezetha came the materials. Seven and a half years was it in building, being completed in the eleventh year of his reign. This splendid edifice was dedicated with a magnificence which beggars description. It was the great occasion of Solomon's life, and he was the grand central figure in the scene. All Israel was present—heads of tribes, paternal chiefs, priests, Levites; but Solomon himself, invested with no priestly power, standing on a brazen platform erected in front of the altar, offered the dedicatory prayer, containing some of the sublimest utterances that ever fell from human lips. The mysterious cloud of divine glory filled the sacred structure—the heavenly fire descended and consumed the sacrifice—God thus manifesting his approving presence.

Jerusalem saw other grand structures rise under Solomon's hand. Among these was a palace for

himself, which required eight years longer than the temple to complete, another—perhaps inclosed within this—for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh—the house of the forest of Lebanon; here he sat in his court of judgment, seated on a throne of ivory and gold, which was supported by six lions on either side. There were also ivory palaces and ivory towers, used for the king's armory. Besides these he had a summer palace at Lebanon; he built pools of water and costly aqueducts and stately gardens. Tadmor in the wilderness, now Palmyra, was built by him, the massive ruins of which are the marvel of modern travelers.

The style of grandeur in which he lived almost surpasses credence. Forty thousand horses for his chariots and an army of horsemen were at his command. He rode in royal state, clad in snow-white raiment, in a magnificent chariot of cedar, decked with silver and gold and purple, attended by a body-guard of three-score valiant men, tallest and most beautiful of Israel's sons, arrayed in Tyrian purple, their long black hair sprinkled with gold-dust. His banquets were of corresponding splendor—all his plate and drinking vessels were of gold. Silver was so plenty "it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." This, and much more that might be added, gives us a glimpse of the outward splendor of his reign.

But we have a juster view of his greatness when we recall his pre-eminent wisdom—the literary at-

tainments and achievements which render him the prodigy of the ages. His knowledge of mechanics—as evinced in rearing those massive sub-structures of the temple, which remain until this day—surpassed that of recent times. In natural history, botany, zoology, and kindred branches, he was the father, if not the superior, of all modern naturalists. He spoke of “trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beast, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.” He rose also from the detail of the naturalist and scientist to the broad principles of the philosopher and the lofty heights of the poet. Three thousand proverbs, a thousand and five songs, were the literary children of his fruitful brain. Much of the highest wisdom of the Sacred Book—the divinest counsel to guide the feet of men in all ages—flowed from his inspired pen. The proverbs of Solomon, preserved in the inspired volume, are the surest guide for the young man of our age to follow. His voice cries to-day in the streets and places of concourse of our cities and towns in the ears of every young man, saying, “My son, . . . keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.”

But we must hasten to view this favored child of wisdom and heir of fortune in another and sadder

light. Can a character of such colossal proportions crumble and decay? Can wisdom so transcendent degenerate to folly? Can a heart in which are the principles of righteousness and truth become the home of sin and base desire? Behold the possibilities of human nature, heavenward and earthward, in the towering heights and degrading depths to which the character of Solomon rises and sinks! His decline forms one of the saddest pages in the annals of history.

This same man that built the Temple of Jehovah and consecrated it with his solemn prayer, and worshiped to divine acceptance the true God, also built, on the southern heights of sacred Olivet, sanctuaries to three heathen deities—Ashtareth, the goddess of Phœnicia; Chemosh, the war-god of Moab; and Molech, god of Ammon. The rites with which these deities were worshiped were too cruel and licentious for detail.

Not only was his character tarnished by the permission of idolatry, but the foul sin of polygamy, in its most aggravated form, stained the purity of his life. This was not a new feature in the life of many heroic characters of Old Testament history, but Solomon carried it to an extent before unparalleled. He first married, in his youth, the Egyptian princess, Naamah; afterward were added a vast number of inferior wives and concubines—all of them, probably, of foreign extraction—forming a harem of Oriental beauty and splendor.

All of this was in direct opposition to the spirit and precepts of the Divine Law. His treasures, chariots, and wives were expressly prohibited in the Book of the Law. Concerning the king to be set over Israel it is said: "He shall not multiply horses to himself, . . . neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."

Let no one claim that Solomon had the approbation of God in these misdeeds. It is true that he lived in an age when the education and morals of men were far below their present standard, and some things were permitted by God by reason of their demoralized condition. It is, nevertheless, true that God never gave the seal of his approval to polygamy or to any of the sins that disfigure the characters of Scripture history.

Let us not involve the holy God in the terrible sin of Solomon, nor excuse it because of his superior qualities, nor plead it in extenuation of our own misdoings. Rather let us seek to know the hidden causes of his fall, and tremble as we see how insecure may be the foundations that lie beneath the fair-seeming structure of our own character.

What, then, were the causes that produced this mournful decline, and overhung with darkest clouds the closing years of a life beginning with such high promise? We approach this question with the more eager interest, because the principles upon which character is

built, and the influences effecting its demoralization, are generically the same in all ages. Men are rotting inwardly to-day, and the pillars of their characters crumbling to decay, from the very same influences that wrought the ruin of Solomon. Moreover, this fact of the decline and fall of character, once lofty and apparently strong, is but the commonest occurrence in modern society. We do well to study its insidious causes.

First, then, the *superior endowments* of Solomon became a snare to him, as they are liable to prove to every gifted nature. Great talents involve great liabilities. Every being is subject to inexorable laws, which cannot be violated with impunity; God secures no man from the legitimate penalties of their violation. One of these laws is that which requires the improvement of talent as a necessary condition of increasing or even retaining it. When God gave Solomon that priceless largess of wisdom he did not exempt him from this law, nor take the work of preserving his character and insuring his ultimate well-being into his own hands. It is a fatal delusion that there is a mysterious gift of God, called Grace, which allows a man to sleep on the lap of some fair Delilah, without being shorn of the locks of his strength—a magic power that holds a man to the right against his own deliberate choice. No. Solomon, divinely endowed, was yet arbiter of his own destiny, and on him rested the weighty responsibility

of the unalterable law, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." He failed rightly to employ the heavenly gift, and, failing, lost the precious boon. And to you, my friend, comes the warning voice of his sad fall. You who are highly gifted of God and favored among men—you who wear the crown of genius, or wisdom, or brilliant talent—you who are endowed with cultured mind and learning's amplest stores—you, young men of the schools and universities of our favored land—you who stand on sunny heights of honor—you to whom God has intrusted the dangerous talent of wealth—you who are exalted to lofty summits of Christian privilege and grace—remember, that with these superior gifts come corresponding responsibility and danger, and beware lest, like Solomon, you fall from the dizzy heights of favor to the darkest depths of shame.

Another cause wrought with insidious influence to effect his overthrow. *Solomon was the dupe of that prince of deceptive devils, misnamed Policy.* It was from motives of policy, doubtless, that he entered into alliance with Egypt's king; it was from motives of policy that he married the daughter of that king, and took to his bosom his first heathen wife. Did ever man or woman marry from policy—political, financial, or social interest—that in the end did not find it the most miserable policy that ever mortal

pursued, yielding its bitter fruits of sorrow and sin? There is but one bond that can ever bind two human hearts together in union strong and holy enough for the marriage relation; and that golden bond is Love—true, pure, uncalculating, heaven-born love.

It was policy at first, unquestionably, that built heathen sanctuaries and encouraged idolatrous worship—that he might gain the favor of foreigners and show a generous latitude becoming a liberal-minded prince. For we cannot suppose that Solomon erected such idol temples for his own worship. The argument was specious, as it always is; the influence, insinuating; the result, fatal.

So men to-day adopt measures, conform to customs, form associations, contract marriages, enter into business engagements, impelled by some motive of expediency, forgetting the eternal standard of Right, and the law that knows no exemption, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The darkening clouds that gathered round the head of Solomon, the sins and woes that cursed his later years, may well teach us to beware of the policy that leads to dangerous alliances and sinful associations.

In estimating the causes of Solomon's decline, we must also remember the danger that attends *great worldly prosperity*. Human nature is too weak to bear, unharmed, great elevation. Dazzled and blinded by the splendor of rank and honor and

power and wealth, man reels and falls from the giddy height.

Does it surprise you that one of such a rare nature and high endowments as Solomon possessed should be dazed by the brilliancy of any earthly light, and fall from such a height to sins of so great enormity as we have specified? Look into your own heart and the problem is solved. To how slight an eminence can you be lifted without becoming giddy? Let but one title be added to your name—one simple green wreath of honor be put upon your brow—a trivial office be secured—a few thousands swell your purse—a house larger and costlier than your neighbor's be yours; acquire an equipage more dashing—a little more learning—a higher social status—a costlier ring upon your finger, even—a richer fabric on your person—and how likely is it to affect your spirit and bearing?

Ah, how little does it take of earth's coveted goods to make us forget the corruption within us, the grave that awaits us, the God that made us, the heaven that invites us! Let us be warned of this danger in time, and remember that it was this same Solomon who said, "The *prosperity* of fools shall destroy them." And he, wisest of men, illustrated the truth of his own proverb.

But finally Solomon fell, a willing victim to the *seductive charms of pleasure and carnal indulgence*. One sentence of the Inspired Volume reveals to us

this fatal cause: "Solomon loved many strange women: . . . his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God." Of all the insidious, corrupting, dangerous influences that ever wrought the ruin of man, the influence of a bad woman is the most fatal and irremediable. "She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Let the fall of Solomon and David and Samson, and many another, stronger than yourself, warn you, young man, against sinking into the voluptuous arms of enchanting Pleasure, pierced through and through with the poisoned dart of death.

How replete with lessons is the life of this son of fortune: lessons for every one to ponder with serious mind!

How powerless are reason and learning to preserve character in the light of such a history as this! How weak is human nature in its best and strongest estate! Who can trust his own heart when such as Solomon fall? Can you, young man? Are you stronger, safer than he, leaning on that broken staff?

Who can hope to fill the full measure of his ambition with the good or gain of this world, with this history before him, and such sad wailings sounding in his ear as come from the heart of the Preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes? Ah, these *confessions* of the Preacher, let them be pondered. Solomon and

all the glory of his forty years' brilliant reign have departed ; but these remain to be read by the generations of men.

Let us learn to beware of the *beginnings* of sin. Not suddenly did this mighty prince fall. The Arabian traditions relate that in the staff on which he leaned there was a worm which was secretly gnawing it asunder. The legend is an apt emblem of the truth. Early in his youth the worm began to eat away the strength of his staff. For years, doubtless, his religious ideal was far above his actual life—the life full of strange inconsistencies and contradictions, as is the life of many a man—now saintly, and now beastly ; now praying, and now locked fast in the embrace of sin. Young man, take care that no worm secretly gnaws at the staff of support on which you lean.

What of Solomon's final state ? Saved or lost ? The good God only knows. In the series of frescoes on the walls of the Campo Santo, at Pisa, he is represented, in the resurrection, as looking doubtfully to the right and to the left, not knowing on which side his lot will be cast. If he wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, as it is probable he did, he saw at least the folly of his sins. Let us listen to the deep-toned voice of warning that comes to us from his inspired wisdom—sadly illustrated by his uninspired life—"Fear God, and keep his commandments."

DANIEL
THE UNCOMPROMISING YOUNG MAN.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."—CHRONICLES.

"The purity of moral habits is of very little use to a man, unless it is accompanied by that degree of firmness which enables him to act up to what he may think right, *in spite of solicitations to the contrary.*"

—SYDNEY SMITH.

"Noble he was, contemning all things mean;
His truth unquestioned, and his soul serene;
Of no man's presence did he feel afraid;
At no man's question did he look dismayed."—CRABBE.

"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him."—DANIEL vi, 3.

THE grandest object for human contemplation is a noble character. A lofty type of a true and regal man, great and good, is humanity's richest heritage. As Mont Blanc, king of the Alpine mountains, rears his sublime head above the surrounding peaks, and the sunlight irradiates his snowy crown when mists and darkness have enveloped their summits, so here and there in the family of man is seen one of colossal moral stature, towering above his fellows, his head crowned with a coronal of light, while darkness settles on the brow of other men. Such is the character which is the subject of our present study. We cannot contemplate it without feeling the fires of inspiration kindle in our hearts. And, though the character of Daniel is so lofty and noble, it does not awaken aspirations only to quench them by the hopelessness of attaining like loftiness and nobleness of being. So beautifully human, so grandly simple, is this character, that you feel there is in it nothing impossible to you; and it stands

before you, in all its charm of manly beauty, an illustrious and inspiring example of what your character may yet become. Thus Daniel is a model character for the study and imitation of all who would achieve any thing worthy in life. Let us seek to learn, then, what we may from the history and characteristics of Daniel, the Uncompromising Young Man.

Daniel was the son of nobility, if not of royalty, and his early home was doubtless in one of the most distinguished families in Jerusalem. When yet a mere lad he saw the holy city of his birth invaded by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, then associated with his father, Nabopolassar, on the throne of Babylon. The city was sacked by the foe; its treasures were seized, and many of its inhabitants were carried away captives to Babylon.

Among those thus borne away into a foreign land was the young Daniel. It was a strange and sad experience for one so young to be torn away from a loved home, and you may well imagine the emotions that stirred his bosom as he marched over burning sands to the great city of the Euphrates. By special command of the king, Daniel and three other Jewish youths were selected to be put in training, and educated in the Chaldean language and learning, for honorable service at the royal court. Here began a career of signal success and honor. And it did

not begin with an *accident*, or a favorable turn in the wheel of fortune.

Observe, that the foundation of all Daniel's after greatness and success is *true personal merit*. Here you see before you an heir of humanity, a man simply—a young man like many of you, with his life-fortune to make, as you have. And if God favors and honors him, it is because of a subjective ground for such favor in himself; and the same favor awaits every man who will bear himself in similar manner.

The king wants for his palace some young men of special qualities, "well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as have ability in them to stand" before him; and he orders one of his chief officers, Ashpenaz, to search for such among these Hebrew youth.

Daniel and his three companions meet the requirements, and, in consequence, are selected. Young as Daniel is, he has not idled away the golden hours of his early youth. Of princely blood, he is no Absalom, nor any of his kith, squandering years and wasting strength in frivolity and dissipation. He has not *dreamed* of honor and promotion, but wrought with brain and hand for the prize.

The kings of society are ever on the look-out for such young men, to raise them to positions of trust and honor. You need not fear, young man, in whom

is "an excellent spirit," that the bright jewel within will not flash out its brilliance to the eyes of men. Toil on, shine on; you will soon be invited to a higher seat, and thence to a higher still.

But what awaits the young Daniel in his new sphere of life? A test of character which thus early exhibits his *uncompromising spirit* and unswerving fidelity to the truth he holds.

These young men who are being educated for life at court are fed from the king's table—a special favor, as most youths would esteem it—and are feasted on dainty meats and choicest wines. Why should not Daniel be satisfied with such fare as this? True, it comes from the table of a heathen, and has been idolatrously consecrated, while he is a Jew, and has been taught to regard such meat as ceremonially unclean. But, then, he is no longer in Jerusalem; he is in Babylon; it is the custom of the place, and is it not well to conform to the customs of the society in which you chance to be? "‘Among Romans, do as Romans do.’ Why not? Better yield a point so trivial than to attract attention by one's singularity."

So reasons many a young man, with the fatal sophistry of evil. He has not been accustomed to taste the ruddy wine, and his parents have taught him to *beware of the cup*, and God's word has uttered its note of warning in his ear. But at length he finds himself among associates where the wine-cup is freely

passed; at a wedding banquet, in the club-room, around some festal board. The hand of friendship places it to his lips. "Drink," says the voice of persuasion. "Touch not," whispers the holy voice within. But he heeds it not; custom is stronger than conscience, persuasion mightier than principle, fear overmasters fidelity; the fatal step is taken! Henceforth the way downward and deathward is easy and short!

Not thus was it with this strong-purposed Hebrew youth. His early religious principles, wrought into the very texture of his character, were stronger than the force of outward circumstances. Notwithstanding the custom of his associates, the request of the officers in charge over him, and the king in whose hands his life and fortune were, with a true heroism that wins your admiration, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank!"

Heroic purpose! Who can measure its influence upon his own after-history and upon the world? Had that bold stand for his God and for his conscience *not* been made, the Book of Daniel, with its sublime visions of prophecy—the Apocalypse of the Old Testament—had not been written, the world had never heard of this illustrious youth, nor possessed that peerless pearl of human character, the Kohinoor jewel among the gems of humanity.

A single purpose of conscientious resistance to an evil custom, manfully made and heroically kept, has given to the world its grandest benefactors. So Franklin purposed that he would not defile his lips with the daily drams which he saw were cursing his fellow-apprentices, and the whole world is feasting to-day on the ripened fruit from that one bud of strong resolve.

But Daniel, though firm of purpose and invincible in his integrity, is yet *well-mannered and courteous*. An incorruptible conscience does not imply a sour temper or incivility of manners. He politely makes his request to the officers over him to give him and his companions a simple vegetable diet, and pure water to drink. They have no faith in such a diet to give fairness of complexion and vigor of health, and fear the consequences if the thing comes to the knowledge of the king; but Daniel takes the responsibility, *trusting in his God*.

The trial proves eminently satisfactory. These pulse-fed, water-drinking Hebrew youth have a ruder countenance and a more vigorous body than any of their associates who feast on the king's dainties and drink his wines. Besides, and better still, their minds, unclogged by a surfeited body, are fresh, and facile in the acquisition of knowledge, so that at the end of three years, when they stand before Nebuchadnezzar for examination, he finds that "in all matters

of wisdom and understanding" they have not only surpassed their young fellow-students, but are "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the realm!"

Here is a lesson on a temperate and physiological habit of life that young people who propose to invest any capital in their brains would do well to heed. It was not a miracle that gave to these youth the fair countenance, the active mind, and the surpassing wisdom; but it was the legitimate operation of hygienic principles, with the added blessing of Heaven, which is sure to follow obedience to its own laws.

"A loaden stomach makes a leaden mind." "Wine is a mocker" to the brain, for it promises clearness, but it gives confusion; it promises brilliance, but stupefaction is its fruit. The young man at college is sick, and forced to abandon his studies. The fond parents think he is dying of severe mental application. The real cause, in too many instances, is late suppers and wine-drinking.

To return to the subject of our study: Daniel's religion and temperance have been no hinderance to his advancement yet, but have helped him up the way of promotion. Let us view him in this brilliant heathen court, a model for all young men in maintaining an unblemished character and a life of beautiful piety amid the many temptations and seductive influences which surround him.

An opportunity soon occurs to reveal his worth and lift him into a higher position. The king is troubled in his dreams, and among all the wise men of his kingdom none can tell him the forgotten dream, much less interpret its meaning. In his wrath he commands them all to be slain. Daniel mildly protests against this indiscriminate slaughter, and asks for time to consider the matter, promising to satisfy the king's demands.

Behold now the faith and piety of this young Hebrew, shining with a brightness and beauty surpassing the brilliant colors in the arch of hope against a darkened sky! He believes in the God of his father. He believes in the efficacy of prayer! His separation from the holy city and mingling with the worshipers of false gods have not caused him to forget the God of Israel; and his acquisitions in the science and wisdom of earth have not, as with too many, rendered him skeptical concerning the higher wisdom of heaven, which God giveth to them that ask in faith.

A difficult task is before him as ever mortal undertook. A dream, which a wicked king had forgotten, is to be reproduced, and its mysterious import revealed! Did ever work so hopeless confront you? Did ever difficulty so insuperable stand between you and the goal of your hopes? But life is at stake. It is do this or die. And Daniel feels that God has

other work for him to do in the coming years, and is not quite ready to have his head fall by the executioner's stroke. So he undertakes a task that might appall an angel! And he undertakes it in the right way. *He betakes himself to God in fervent prayer!* See him, as with thoughtful brow and measured step he goes from the king's presence to his own house, and lays the weighty matter before his three pious friends—the immortal worthies of the fiery furnace, of whom also the world has heard! "Let us," says this God-trusting man, "desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that we may not die with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

Behold them bowed in earnest pleading of heart and lip before Jehovah's throne. Did ever prayer salute his ear in vain? Did ever heart repose on him without an answering throb of sympathy and a ready hand of help? Heaven responds to these pleading youth! The secret is revealed to Daniel. His prayer is turned to praise to the God of heaven, with whom is wisdom and might, and who giveth each to whom he will.

Young friend, whatever you learn or forget, forget not the throne of grace which your Christian mother taught you to approach on bended knee with suppliant words! Whatever else you do or fail to do, fail not daily to bow before the Father-God, and ask his help in the struggle of life.

Is *your* task difficult? Pray, and God shall make your heart brave and your hand strong. Are you struggling alone up the rugged steep of fortune, with many a faltering step and many a desponding hour? Pray, and heaven's light shall gleam upon that darkened path, and the Almighty's hand shall be given yours in partnership of life. Do temptations assail you, and evil associates allure you, and dangers gather thick about you? Pray, O pray to the God of Israel and of Daniel, and the tempter's power shall be futile while you are surrounded by heaven's munitions of defense.

This praying Daniel is a young man of *highest honor and truest humility*. True to God and true to man, he arrogates no superior wisdom to himself, and seeks not to make his own character more lustrous by casting a shadow over the character of another.

With the secret of the dream revealed to him, he hastens into the king's presence, not to boast over his associates among the wise men of Babylon, but to assure the king that the demand he had made was beyond the wisdom of mortal man, and only the God of heaven could reveal the mysterious secret. He attempts to make no personal capital out of the interpretation, as he might have done, and as a less noble nature would have done. He confesses, with the most magnanimous frankness and humility, that the

secret is not revealed to him because of any wisdom that he possesses more than other men.

Noble Daniel, greater in that large-souled honor and genuine humility than Alexander, conqueror of the world, or Cæsar, on the throne of boundless empire!

He tells the king his dream : A great image of gold and silver and brass and iron and clay — typifying the three great empires which were to rise after the Babylonian, namely, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.

Nebuchadnezzar is so impressed that he falls on his face before Daniel, and commands his attendants to offer oblations and burn incense to him as a god. But the young prophet wants no such honor. He cannot, however, and does not, refuse the deserved promotion which follows his distinguished service. He is too loyal to God and his country and humanity not to accept, when thrust upon him, any position wherein he can best honor his God and serve his fellows, however great its responsibility and onerous its duties. He is immediately made governor of the whole province of Babylon, and chief inspector of the sacred order of Magi, and becomes the king's most intimate counselor.

Let us follow him into this new and higher sphere of life, and, remembering the demoralizing influences about him, together with the fact that he is yet a mere

youth, having scarcely attained his majority, we shall still more ardently admire the strength and beauty of his peerless character.

Let your imagination picture the scenes amid which his daily life was passed. The city itself—great Babylon—over which he was now placed, surpassed in grandeur, brilliance, and wickedness, any city of modern times. It was built upon a level plain, in the form of a square, fourteen miles on either side. A prodigious wall, fifty-six miles in circumference, inclosed it—a wall more than sixty feet higher than Trinity steeple, New York, and wide enough for many chariots to be driven abreast on its top, with two hundred and fifty towers, and a hundred gates of solid brass.

Its streets excelled in regularity and width those of Philadelphia or Paris; fifty of them stretched across the city with mathematical straightness, crossing each other at right angles, each street being a hundred and fifty feet wide. Nearly one half the space within the city was occupied with squares and pleasure-gardens. The river Euphrates flowed directly through the city, its banks lined with walls and quays, and the stream spanned by bridges of magnificent construction. Two splendid palaces stood in the midst of the city—the one embracing an area of nearly four miles, and the other seven and a half in compass—imposing structures, beside which the palaces of the Cæsars and the Tuileries dwindle into insignificance.

Here, too, was the grand Temple of Belus, or Baal, a costly structure with magnificent furnishings—the latter of which alone are said to have been valued at nearly a hundred million of dollars!—and the lofty tower of the temple stretching heavenward, far above the highest pyramids of Egypt. And here were hanging gardens of surpassing extent and loveliness, carried aloft into the air, presenting a varied scenery of hill and dale, forest and meadow, in the midst of the bustling city.

But the inhabitants of this luxurious city, dwelling amid the beautiful surroundings of art and the costly adornments of wealth, were proud and sensual, living in ease and reveling in vice. It yet remains to be proved, in the history of the world, that Art fosters Virtue, or that Wealth ministers to Worth. Not Babylon, nor Athens, nor Rome, nor Florence, nor Paris—with all their splendid productions of art—has been such a nursery of virtue and foster-parent of religion, as New England, with her rugged hills, her barren soil, her humble cottages with their simple manners and daily devotions, her little white school-houses with their spelling-books and Bibles, and her neat frame churches with their Puritanic Gospel.

The young men of Babylon—as all history informs us—were self-indulgent and profligate, devoted to enervating pleasures and corrupting amusements. They were fond of dramatic entertainments somewhat after

the "Black Crook" style of modern times, where decency was shamed by female dancers in slender attire; they reveled in midnight bacchanals, where the wine-cup passed freely from lip to lip, and the lecherous song went round the board. Her princes and her rulers, her great and wise men, were corrupt in heart and dissolute in life.

It was in such a city and amid such society that Daniel, the pious Hebrew youth, was called to live and shine; and that not as a private citizen, associating only with a few Jewish friends, but as governor of the province, and the highest official at court; while the king himself, who had raised him to power, and to whom he was amenable, scarcely possessed virtue superior to his profligate subjects.

Will the religion of the youthful Daniel stand such an atmosphere as this? Transplanted from the genial air of Jerusalem to the poisonous malaria of Babylon, and the very palace itself, will it not wither and die, or at least become a sickly plant without vitality or fruit? Nay, his character is made of sterner stuff than that. It is no willow, to bend before the gentlest zephyr, but the stalwart oak, which the hurricane blast cannot move.

Young friend, look at that picture of the unyielding Daniel, in the very heart of the most corrupt city in history, and learn the worth of genuine religion, and the might of a divinely fortified character. **A**

religion that one cannot carry with him round the world without freezing in the Arctic zone, or melting at the tropics, or sickening in the malarious atmosphere of Paris, or catching the gold fever on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, is not the real article which Daniel had, but a huge pious fraud !

And yet how many a young man, piously trained and perhaps of religious profession, entering new scenes, forgets the solemn vows that are upon him, the sanctity of the religion he has professed, or at least has been taught by a godly mother, and, borne on the rapid currents of temptation and sin, is soon lost to the Church, lost to virtue and heaven ! Learn we all a lesson of religious integrity from Daniel in the court of Babylon !

But the *lofty courage, the sublime moral heroism*, of this Daniel deserves more special notice, as seen in subsequent acts of his eventful life. Nebuchadnezzar dreams again, and Daniel is summoned into his presence to give the interpretation. The dream this time is one of evil omen, presaging the banishment of the king from his throne and from the society of men, and his most humiliating debasement among the beasts of the field, to be followed by his restoration after he shall have learned that the "Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." And all this is to come upon him because of his arrogance and sin.

Daniel sees the portending evil with anxious brow. The king is his benefactor and friend. He loves him,

and would fain be witness and helper of his prosperity and happiness. But he is no coward and no sycophant; he boldly declares to the king his certain fate, while, with a tender, manly, loving fortitude, he urges this mightiest monarch of the earth to penitence and reformation, saying, "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by showing mercy unto the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

It is not easy thus to charge upon a friend's conscience, and tell him face to face, with courageous words of love, of the sin he is cherishing, and the doom that is gathering to break on his guilty head. Daniel before Nebuchadnezzar, Paul before Felix and the false-hearted Drusilla, John the Baptist before the guilty Herod, may well teach us all a lesson of courage, and inspire within every heart a manlier heroism.

Years pass; Nebuchadnezzar has been driven from men to "eat grass as oxen;" restored to his throne, only to leave it again for the grave, where every "path of glory" ends. Two or three successors have had their brief hours of authority on that same throne, and have quickly reached the same goal. Daniel, meanwhile, has occupied a less conspicuous place at court, if he has not been wholly forgotten by those in power.

Belshazzar is now king, and Babylon, over-ripe in

its iniquity, is ready to fall, according to the prediction of Jehovah. The last night's reign of this proud monarch has come. It is a grand festive occasion, in which the whole city participates. Every-where there are feasting and reveling, the song and the dance; torches gleam in lines of brilliant fire along the broad streets; music floats on the evening air. The grand banqueting hall of the palace is in a fiery blaze of light. Great Babylon's noblest lords and fairest ladies are gathered there; wit and wisdom, learning and royalty, vie with each other in the high carnival joy. Diamonds flash their brilliant hues; flowers emit their fragrant odors; jeweled necks and heaving bosoms, raven locks and eyes of love, flowing wine and tripping feet—all combine to dethrone reason and enthroned folly.

Belshazzar moves amid this scene of splendor with the proud bearing of a god—the adored of the frenzied throng.

“A thousand dark nobles all bend at his board:
Fruits glisten, flowers blossom, meats steam, and a flood
Of the wine that man loveth runs redder than blood.
Wild dancers are there, and a riot of mirth,
And the beauty that maddens the passions of earth;
And the crowd all shout, while the vast roofs ring,
‘All praise to Belshazzar, Belshazzar the king!’”

Wine then, as now and ever, maddens the brain. Revelry leads to blasphemy. Belshazzar, flushed with this fiery mocker, orders the golden vessels from

the holy temple of Jerusalem brought forth, and blasphemously insults the King of Heaven.

But look! What rivets the king's gaze on yonder wall? What terror-thrill blanches his cheeks, and shakes his whole frame with unmanly fear? An armless hand writes in mysterious characters on the plastering of the wall! In vain the astrologers attempt to interpret the mystic writing. The king in his terror offers the third place in his kingdom to the man who will read the ominous words; but the wisdom of Babylon is inadequate to the task. The queen-mother, Nitocris, reminds the affrighted monarch of the forgotten Daniel, the man in whom was the "excellent spirit," who had rendered his "father"—or, rather, grandfather—such signal service.

The wise Hebrew is hastily brought before the king. There he is, again in the presence of a distinguished monarch; older now by thirty years than when he stood before Nebuchadnezzar with kindly words of warning; older, but not less bold and true; Daniel, the faithful and the fearless still.

Hear him, as he reminds Belshazzar of God's dealings with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, and then, making a bold onset on his conscience, declares, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and the God

in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Then he reads those words of doom to the terrified monarch: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Unwelcome words; but the monarch instantly fulfills his promise, and proclaims Daniel third ruler in the kingdom.

That very night Belshazzar was slain, and the armies of Cyrus marched into the city along the bed of the Euphrates, whose waters they had turned from their channel. So certainly does God rule. So certainly will the wicked be overtaken in their wickedness, and the righteous rewarded in their right-doing.

Darius the Mede, uncle of Cyrus, is now placed upon the throne of Babylon, and the kingdom united with the Persian empire. But Daniel finds favor with the new king, and to him is given the highest place in the new cabinet. The whole kingdom is divided into a hundred and twenty provinces, with as many princes placed over them, and over these three presidents; and Daniel the Hebrew is "preferred above these presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him." This is honor in fullest scriptural measure. This is reward, such as God only can and will give to the well-doer.

Never did man occupy so high a position who was

more deserving of it. But honor and merit are always targets for the malicious arrows of envy. Daniel cannot stand in such towering prominence above his colleagues in power without exciting this base passion in their breasts. They seek occasion for his overthrow, but seek in vain for any fault in his character or administration.

Behold a marvel of human perfection! What! A prime minister of an extensive kingdom, busiest and most burdened of men, with a hundred and twenty provinces under him, and the eyes of a thousand jealous persons turned toward him—to whom

“Trifles, light as air,
Are . . . confirmations strong
As proofs of Holy Writ,”

and not one fault at which the most contemptible critic of them all can puff a breath of censure! There stands the model man, concerning whom his envious enemies declare that there is but one point at which he can be assailed, and that the noblest trait in his matchless character—his fidelity to God.

Would God such a testimony might be borne by the world concerning every one who professes allegiance to the law of God! Better, my friends, that men should mark you for the bold stand you take for God and religion, than to mock at your piety as a weak and worthless sentiment.

At the instigation of these envious princes the weak king issues a special decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man, save of the king, for thirty days, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Daniel knows that the decree is signed, and that it was wrested from the king by his jealous colleagues to reach his case. Let us see what he will do.

See him as with thoughtfulness he enters his house and goes to that chamber where, amid all the hurry and care of his official duties, he has been accustomed to repair three times a day to pray to his God. The window toward Jerusalem is open. Under that window are his skulking enemies listening to catch the sound of his voice in prayer. Shall he close the window? Shall he offer his prayer in secret and in silence? What the world miscalls Prudence whispers, "Yes, God will hear thy unvocalized prayer. Retain thy place, save thy life—a slight compromise will shield thee from death."

"Begone! Begone, base, coward spirit!" cries the victorious Daniel. "Aforetime I have prayed with open window and with uttered words, and thus my prayer shall rise to heaven this hour."

Down he falls upon his knees, and, regardless of mortal ears and human decrees, is soon absorbed in holy converse with the God of heaven. O, heroic soul! O, truest of the true, and faithfulest of the

faithful! Thou knowest not what streams of holy inspiration shall flow to the hearts of tempted men from this one act of fidelity to God.

The sequel must be briefly told. The king's decree is irrevocable, though it grieves him to the heart that the punishment falls upon his much-loved Daniel.

Follow this fearless, faithful martyr to the lions' den, and learn how God honors and delivers those who honor him. There they are, as hunger-fierce and blood-fired beasts as ever crouched their victims in the Coliseum at Rome. Into their howling den the helpless Daniel is thrown. The mouth of the den is closed and sealed. The king and his princes depart, and Daniel is left alone with these ferocious monarchs of the forest as the dark night shuts down upon him.

Alone, did I say? Nay, a radiant form is there; the same that walked amid the lambent flames of the fiery furnace; the same that John saw on lonely Patmos; the Angel of the Covenant of the Old Testament; the Christ of the New Testament—and with his presence Daniel is safer and happier between the lions' paws than Darius in his palace.

The morning dawns. The anxious king is early at the den, and with saddened tones cries, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the

lions?" And from within the gentle, welcome voice of the martyr is heard responding, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

That very day the accusers of Daniel were cast into that same den, and the lions "broke all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den."

Daniel lived to be honored by Cyrus, the succeeding king, and died at over ninety years of age, full of years and full of honors. Thus true and faithful to the last was Daniel. Thus true and faithful to the last was Daniel's God.

What if Daniel had not been a believer in the validity and efficacy of prayer! What if his faith in the supernatural verity of this mightiest power given to man had been destroyed, or even shaken, by the subtle influence of the materialistic philosophy which we have reason to believe was prevalent in his day, as it is in ours!

Daniel was then in the very midst of that Oriental philosophy which was the fruitful seed from which not a little of our modern skepticism has sprung. It was from the Chaldean Magi, with whom Daniel was so intimately associated, and with whose teachings he was thoroughly conversant, that Democritus, but a little more than a century later, probably learned

much of his famous atomic theory of the universe; a theory which, centuries later, Lucretius, the Latin poet and pupil of Epicurus, revived, in his famous atheistic poem, "*De Rerum Natura*;" and which, in substance, some of our recent "advanced thinkers" have thrust upon the attention of the present generation, as the latest and greatest outcome of modern scientific thought. There is nothing in it essentially new; and, notwithstanding the acknowledged advance of *genuine* modern science, there can be little doubt that this theory, upon which a large part of the materialistic skepticism of to-day substantially plants itself, was, in its essence, quite as well understood by Daniel as it is by Spencer, or Huxley, or Tyndal, or Hæckel. But Daniel's faith in God, as the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, did not suffer any serious shock from this deceptive philosophy. He was not a shallow thinker, and could not easily be beguiled by false, though plausible, hypotheses. *Because* "in all matters of wisdom and understanding" he was "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the realm"—as the king himself bare witness—he discarded the false philosophy, and held firmly to the Higher Philosophy, and the true faith in God as Creator and Governor of the world. Hence his real greatness; hence his high distinction; hence his signal triumphs and his marvelous power over his fellow-men. Had he faltered in those crisis hours of

his experience, had the insinuating skepticism of his time palsied his faith and unnerved his arm, he would have gone down beneath the waves of oblivion, and the world would have missed the history of the man who to-day stands in the fore-front of its most distinguished heroes. Shall our faith in God and in the omnipotence of prayer receive stimulus and strength from the example of this unfaltering believer?

Young friends, what this heroic man was, in fidelity, in truth, in honor, in invincible integrity, in high courage, in religion, you can be. And being this, what his God was to him—the Guide of his youth, the Inspirer of wisdom, the Giver of strength, the Hearer of prayer, the unfailing Companion, the Deliverer from peril, the omnipotent Friend—all this he will be to you.

Learn, then, to honor and to serve the God of Daniel; learn that true principle is true expediency; learn that the busiest man may be a praying man, and that prayer is neither foolish nor futile; learn that the saintliest character is not incompatible with the loftiest position, and that religion is for this bustling world, and not for the silent cloister; learn to do right though the heavens fall; learn, above all, that God reigns, and sooner will he abdicate his throne than allow any of his eternal laws to be violated without punishment or kept without reward.

Not one of the minute prophecies of Daniel, concerning events stretching all along the track of the ages, has thus far failed. Skeptical young man, take this well-attested fact to your heart. He prophesied of Christ, and the glory of his coming kingdom. That kingdom has come, and its glorious effulgence is shining on you all to-day. Walk, work, triumph in that light, and the God of Daniel shall be your defense, and the heaven of Daniel your everlasting home.

LOT
THE SELF-SEEKER.

"Every-where in life the true question is, not what we gain, but what we do."—CARLYLE.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."—JESUS.

“And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.”—GENESIS xiii, 12.

NOT every painting in the Louvre or the Pitti Gallery or the Vatican is a masterpiece. Here and there only is one that entrances the beholder. So is it in the wonderful gallery of Scripture portraits, painted by the hand of Inspiration. All do not possess equal beauty, nor inspire equal enthusiasm. The subject of our present study has not the nobility of Joseph, nor the fidelity of Daniel, nor yet the baseness of Absalom. Lot, unhappily, is a commoner type of humanity, and therefore, appropriately has a place among representative characters. He was by no means a very bad man, and just as far removed from being a very good man. We may properly place him among that numerous class of persons whose character is distinguished by no lovely traits, and whose goodness, if it must be accorded to them, is quite covered and concealed from view by a thick incrustation of selfishness. With some redeeming traits, Lot stands before us in the Scripture narrative as a self-seeking man; and as such, I hold him up to your view, that

you may see how unlovely and undesirable is such a character.

I. Lot's early years were spent in Ur of Chaldea, north-east of Damascus. His father, Haran, died while he was yet a youth of tender years, and he was placed in the family of his uncle Abraham, who appears ever to have acted toward him the part of an affectionate father; while Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is supposed to have been the sister of Lot. To have been the foster-son and companion of so royal a man as Abraham was a privilege which ought to have left a stamp of distinction on the young man, that no after-years could efface.

Lot journeyed with his uncle Abraham, in obedience to the divine call, into the land of Canaan, through all the migrations of the wandering patriarch, to Haran and the plains of Moreh, thence to Bethel, and southward still, and, by reason of the famine of the country, on to Egypt's fertile land and populous cities; then back again to Canaan and the old tenting-ground near Bethel.

In all these wanderings the worship of Jehovah had been scrupulously observed. There, at Bethel, stood the altar which Abraham had erected when first he pitched his tent there. Lot had been witness and participant of this worship, just as some of you, friends, have bowed so frequently with parents or friends around the household altar, and breathed the

very atmosphere of devotion from infancy up to riper years. Lot seems also to have been favored by Abraham with special advantages, and, on his return from Egypt, was himself possessed of large flocks and herds, with many servants to tend them.

Now comes the great crisis in his life. Hitherto he has lived on terms of happiest intimacy with his uncle Abraham. Both have become rich. The scanty pasture-lands of the rugged hills are not sufficient for their numerous herds, and there is angry contention between their herdsmen.

This is the first recorded example of riches, and of their unhappy effect. By their possession Abraham is troubled, and Lot is cursed. These two kinsmen, whom poverty, hunger, and hardship, amid years of journeyings, could not separate, were brought to the brink of a sad alienation by their abundant possessions. So the ancients represented Mars, the god of war, as the son of Juno, the goddess of riches—Wealth, the mother of Discord. But the chivalrous Abraham will not suffer the strong ties of many years' friendship thus suddenly to be sundered. See his magnanimity in striking contrast with the selfishness of his nephew, Lot. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee," says this conspicuous type of nature's noblemen, "between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I

pray thee, from me : if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Take your stand with these two men on the rocky summit of the mountain, which rises to the east of Beth-el, and look with them over the landscape presented to your view. It is a pivotal point in the history of both. On the choice of that hour depends their future life-history. And Lot is to make the important decision. Northward, far away toward snow-crowned Lebanon, and westward to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the hills and mountain-summits rise to view, with little to invite the covetous eye. Eastward, and toward the south, lies the lovely valley of the Jordan, with its green fields and rich pasturage and tropical luxuriance, reminding Lot of the sunny Eden—the bright vision of which tradition had kept before his youthful mind—or the fertile valley of the Nile, whose glories he had so recently beheld. There, too, in the distance, were the five cities of the plain, of which Sodom and Gomorrah were the chief, with all the attractions of the gay and crowded town. It did not take Lot long to decide. A glance of the eye was enough for him. The tempting scene captivated his heart. The rich, beautiful valley was his choice, and with it the temptations and perils of a corrupt city.

II. Let us look at this choice in its nature and results, and learn the character and end of the self-

seeker ; remembering, meanwhile, the representative character of Lot, and gathering lessons of wisdom from the ashes of his ruined hopes.

There comes a time in the history of every youth, when he is called to make similar choice between diverging paths in life—a choice involving like principles and issues ; deciding, it may be, the whole future of his history ; determining the character and the life ; what he will be and what he will do ; what principles shall guide him, what ends he will seek, and by what methods secure them. But such a decision, involving the future, demands constant compliance with whatever its complete accomplishment requires. It is never henceforth to be banished from the mind. It is an ever-recurring question. Onward, through the ripening years of life, at every turn and step, the choice returns ; the decision is to be ratified ; the adopted principle to be applied ; the results accepted—oftimes the barren hills with honor, or the smiling valley of promise with dishonor. You, my young friends, are standing with Lot on that Bethel mount of observation, making his choice and accepting its issues. We do well to note his errors and guard against his mistakes.

1. First, then, there was in that choice, as there ever is in the conduct of the self-seeker, a *disregard of delicate moral obligations and the interests of others involved*. The liberality of Abraham gave to Lot the opportunity of his life to act a like worthy

part and refuse the kindly proffer. Instead of that, he took advantage of his uncle's generosity and made the selfish choice, unmindful of his indebtedness to Abraham, to whose friendship his present possessions were largely due. He forgot that in choosing the fruitful plain for *himself* he left the sterile hills for his *best friend*. This is the course and the curse of the self-seeker. His own apparent interests blind his eyes to the interest of another. His own distinguished self shuts out of view every other being. "Thou shalt love thy *neighbor as thyself*" is no part of his creed or practice. If Lot had exhibited the honor of his uncle, and chosen the poorest of the land, it would have shed immortal luster upon his character, and placed him in fitting companionship with the princely Abraham, to be admired by all the generations of men. Shall *we* remember that similar opportunities meet *us* in the daily walks of life, and that men behold in our choice the selfish littleness of Lot or the generous greatness of Abraham?

2. But in this choice of Lot was also a disregard of *his own highest interests*. He seems not to have paused to consider the effect of his decision upon his own character and future well-being. The material good in that tempting scene blinded his eyes to every other good, and to the dangers of the choice. There does not appear to be any reference to the will of the Supreme Guide—no looking to the Most High

for guidance, as in the case of Joseph and Daniel. Self only appears in that fatal choice ; and the smallest part of the *true self*—that part only which temporal wealth can minister to. The holier nature is forgotten along with God and the brother man.

How many a young man, in looking out on life, makes the same fatal mistake ! He is choosing a school for preparation and discipline, a profession for his life-work, or a situation in which to prosecute a calling already determined. He stops not to consider the influences that will surround him, the character of his associates, the probable effect upon his own character. The fair promise of immediate pleasure or gain, the golden fruits that glisten in the sunny vale of plenty, captivate the mind, and the most fearful hazards are run to pluck that tempting fruit.

Ah, if you could know the sad history of the young men who have been lured to a false choice—seduced to the golden lands of the far West, or drawn into the crowded thoroughfares of our corrupt cities, by the glittering promise of an easy fortune—you would pause at every decision to ask the most momentous question of all : “ How will it affect my character and destiny ? What risks am I to run to gain this prize ? ” “ But they that will be rich,” saith the word of Inspiration, “ fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

It is related in ancient history that the inhabitants of Oenöe, a town upon a dry island in the vicinity of Athens, bestowed much labor to draw into it a river to water it and make it more fruitful. But when the work was completed and the passages were all opened, the water came rushing in so furiously that it overflowed the whole island and drowned all the people. So, in the accomplishment of their ambitious ends, men do not pause to consider contingent results ; and when the channels of desire are fully open and the long-looked-for tide of prosperity rises, lo ! its streams come rushing in with a fearful, fatal force, whelming the soul in ruin and destruction.

3. Lot may have flattered himself that he had made a capital choice ; let us see what it involved. *Separation from a devoted friend and benefactor.* He might have remained in such proximity to Abraham as to have shared his companionship and counsel.

It is a critical day for a young man when he severs his connection with the friends of his early years. When the stern voice of duty summons you away, and the hand of the Divine Father is grasped as you bid farewell to the loved ones of home, you may go forth in hope, though with moistened eye and saddened heart. But even then every step is beset with snares, and you have need to be cautious in forming new friendships.

Here lies one of the greatest dangers to which the young man is exposed, that of becoming associated with

evil-minded companions. This peril, also, the choice of Lot involved him in. He not only separated himself from Abraham, but *became the companion of the wicked Sodomites*. He may not at first have proposed this to himself. Perhaps he thought he would remain in the fertile plain without the city, feeding his flocks and gathering the riches of the land, and having but little intercourse with the inhabitants of the corrupt town.

With so flattering a promise many a youth hushes the warning voice of conscience as his steps tend toward perilous associations.

But see now how one false choice—a single step in a wrong direction—leads to many entangling alliances with sin and sinners. To pitch your “tent toward Sodom” is ultimately to *enter the gates* of Sodom and make the vile city your home. How long was it before Lot had abandoned his simple tent-life and was a dweller in the gay and vicious city, trafficking with its demoralized citizens, marrying probably one of its fair but frail daughters, identified with those depraved Sodomites by the strongest commercial, social, and family ties.

And what a hazard was that? Can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned? Can he deliberately and for selfish ends, throw himself among base associates and not feel the touch of contamination? No more than he can breathe a poisoned atmosphere without having the virus taint each drop of blood in his veins.

How many a young Lot has turned his steps toward

the crowded town with something of good resolve and moral principle, but underlying it all a deep-rooted selfishness! With a keen eye for the best chance, an opportunity for business is soon found. It does not quite suit his *conscience*, and the *associations* are bad; but there is money in it, and money he is bound to make. His habits are at first simple and his acquaintances few; but gradually the circle of associates extends; the habits of his life are conformed to the society in which he mingles, and the complications in business increase daily. He prides himself on his smartness. He can drive a good bargain, and is climbing rapidly up the steep of fortune. Business thrives. Money flows into his coffers. He is already numbered among the thrifty men of the city.

But what of the *character*, which is more than all earthly good? What of conscience and a pure life? What of God, the Friend and Guide of his early youth? What, above all, of his hopes for the eternal hereafter? Ah, my friends, it is something lost to lose gold; it is much lost to lose honor; but it is all lost to lose God and heaven! *You* may not go so far as this, and yet go too far for integrity and safety. Lot did not mingle with the Sodomites in all their vile abominations. They were even distasteful to him and caused him sorrow. But he who chooses to dwell in Sodom must take its society and endure its evils.

Let us note again the bitter fruits of this unhappy

choice. The city of Sodom, with the other four cities of the plain, was in tributary subjection to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. They sought to throw off the yoke. A sanguinary conflict ensued in the valley of Siddim, in which the revolutionists were conquered and the cities left a prey to the conquerors.

How fares it now with Lot and his accumulated riches, for which he has hazarded so much? Does it *pay* to live in Sodom and share the fate of the Sodomites? He is not only plundered of all his possessions, but carried away with the rest of the captives. A fleeing soldier carries the tidings to Abraham in the plain of Mamre. A less noble man would have left the ungrateful nephew to taste the bitterness of his ungenerous choice. Not so with the great-souled patriarch. He instantly arms his trained servants, three hundred and eighteen, and calling his friends, the Amorites, to his assistance, pursues the victorious army for seventy leagues to Hobah, near Damascus. There, in the night, he falls upon them, rescues Lot and all his substance, together with the people of Sodom and their goods.

See now the strength of evil ties and sinful associations. One would suppose that Lot had seen enough of Sodom by this time, and had learned enough of its wickedness to abandon the guilty city and take up his abode nearer to his pious uncle, especially after this new proof of Abraham's continued friendship. Here is a favorable opportunity to retrace his steps and

escape future peril. But Lot is a type of the self-seeker who sees not the opportunity to do the best thing, and is blinded by the glitter of worldly gain.

How hard it is for the man who has made a misstep to turn back again, though the way is open and the heavenly voice whispers, "Come back, where Virtue smiles her welcome, and Honor holds her waiting crown, and Religion proffers her cup of joy." The false step once taken, the evil choice once made, the sinful alliance once formed—ah, what chains of bondage they fasten round your soul and bind you to the fatal evil. Lot hastened back to Sodom to form new alliances with its wicked inhabitants, engage in new schemes of gain, and await the doom that was gathering over the fated city.

Let us follow him back and learn the final issue of his choice. This city, which he had again chosen for his home, was now ripening for destruction. Its riches were great. The adjacent hills and plains were covered with flocks. The caravans of the East brought their costly treasures to its gates. Streams of wealth flowed into the proud city. Wealth fostered luxury and dissoluteness. Idleness, dissipation, and the most abominable vices characterized the inhabitants. It is the old and oft-repeated lesson of history—great Babylon and its iniquity, proud Athens and its corruption, imperial Rome and its rottenness. The Most High God was forgotten; but his eye beheld, and the day of retribution was at hand.

Look back upon that scene as the shadows of the last night are gathering over the devoted city. The streets are crowded with the thoughtless throng. The boisterous shout and the blasphemous oath ring out on the evening air. Music lends its charm to vice. The tide of revelry and dissipation is rising to its height. As usual, in the cities of the East, many are gathered about the gate; and among them you discern Lot, the subject of our story. All is life and hilarity. Nothing betokens the coming destruction. No gathering cloud with its thunder peals; no notes of warning from the perfumed air; no sign of alarm in the fair heavens above, nor on the placid bosom of the lovely lake on the borders of the city, nor on the smiling face of the flowering earth beneath their feet.

Two strangers approach the gate of the city. They are God's messengers, sent upon an errand of mercy and of retribution. They seem to be common travelers, but angel visitants sometimes come in disguise. They have come to destroy the fated city whose cup of iniquity is full. But the strong hand of prayer has arrested them on their way, and they cannot fulfill their solemn mission until Lot is fairly warned. Abraham, the faithful friend of God, has been praying for his kinsman. That prayer has held back the hand of the Almighty, and the sword of vengeance is stayed till Lot can escape.

O, mighty power of fervent prayer! O, blessed

refuge for parents and friends, who feel that it is the *only* power by which they can reach imperiled loved ones! O, Star of Hope for the desponding soul!

“God’s hands or bound or open are,
As Moses or Elijah prays.”

Fortunate Lot, with such a God-fearing friend to plead his cause! Fortunate youth, for whom a mother’s prayers are rising, or a father’s tears are pleading, or a sister’s love is beseeching, or a fond wife’s supplication makes eloquent appeal to the God of Heaven! If there *is* any deliverance for you, it shall come. If your ear is not deaf, and your heart is not adamant, and your conscience is not seared, and the triple chains of hell are not already about you, you may and shall be saved.

Happily for Lot he was not wholly lost to goodness, nor utterly forgetful of God, amid the general demoralization about him. The memories of earlier years still lingered in his mind; the teachings of pious friends were not erased from the heart’s tablet; religious principles and practice were not entirely abandoned. There is hope for such. There is hope for you, if such is your condition, and you will heed the messenger’s warning which God sends for your deliverance. Lot invites the strangers to his house, and is commended by the pen of Inspiration for his hospitality.

I pause not to dwell upon the scenes of violence and shame which that last night of Sodom witnessed. The rudeness of the vile crowd that gathered around

the house of Lot, the exhibition of the basest passions that ever stigmatized humanity, the entreaties of Lot, the smiting of the rabble with blindness, and their persistent groping for the door while this judicial stroke was yet upon them—all this, and more that I may not describe, reveals a state of society rotten-ripe for destruction.

An hour of quiet having now come, the angels make known their errand to Lot, and bid him hasten to gather his family together, and flee from the city which they have come to destroy. He issues forth into the dark streets of Sodom to warn his sons-in-law. In vain he urges them to flee. Little do they heed his admonition.

The fatal day at length dawns upon the city of sin. The angels urge Lot to depart before the awful cloud of vengeance bursts upon the guilt-cursed inhabitants. He hesitates and fondly lingers. How can he part with his cherished possessions? How hard it is for the worldling to leave the earthly good to which his heart is wedded! How almost impossible for even angel-hands to snatch him from the impending fate! These heavenly visitants seize him and his wife and two daughters, by that firm grasp of love with which Mercy holds fast to the lingering sinner, crying, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Lot lifts up his eyes to the distant mountains, and his heart fails him for fear that the storm of evil will overtake him before they are reached. He pleads that he may seek refuge in the little town of Bela, or Zoar, and his request is granted.

And now, just as the morning sun is gilding the fair city of Sodom with his golden light, the clock of eternity strikes the solemn hour of doom. The cup of wrath is full, and its fiery contents are poured upon the guilty heads of the dwellers in the plain. The sulphurous heavens let fall the fearful showers of liquid fire, and in one hour that lovely garden vale, so like the Eden home, becomes a scene of desolation and death ; and such it has remained from that day until now, a monument of God's retributive justice. Lot's wife lingered, looking back with fond regrets on her loved home ; and the storm overwhelmed her, leaving her body a monumental warning against a world-loving spirit and disobedience to God's merciful entreaties.

Lot saw the ruin which had overtaken his former home, and fearing for his present safety, with little apparent faith in God, fled to the mountains. He might have returned to Abraham and retrieved his lost honor, and perhaps his lost fortune, but like many another, with disappointed hopes and spirit crushed, he preferred to dwell apart from men. And there, with his two daughters, a very troglodyte, dwelling in a gloomy cave, among the mountains of Moab, his

sun goes down behind a somber cloud, and the dark night of oblivion shuts in upon him, amid a scene of drunkenness and shame.

The lessons of his life and character are too many for present review. We see how sadly the *self-seeking spirit* mars the character of even a *religious man*. Lot was indeed a believer in God, and Peter calls him "just" and "righteous." Such he was in the limited meaning of those terms and in comparison with the wicked Sodomites. But generous and large-souled he was not. Place his character beside that of Abraham and it is like the rudely chiseled marble beside the Apollo Belvidere. It is well for us to "look on this picture, and then on this," and choose the nobler type as our model. Let none of us think to conceal, much less eradicate, a worldly nature and a self-seeking spirit by the flimsy covering of a superficial religion. Only the genuine, Christ-like spirit dominant in the heart, and inciting to persistent, manly struggles for the conquest of self, will secure to you the unselfishness which God approves and humanity admires.

We may learn, too, how false are the promises of the god of this world, and how fatal is submission to his imperious sway.

Lot thought he had made a wise and profitable choice, when he chose the smiling valley with its flowers and fruits of fairest promise. How soon the desolating waves of the Dead Sea sweep over his

earthly paradise! He is cursed in what his selfishness takes; Abraham is blessed in what his unselfishness gives. So is it ever in the final issue. The selfish worldling's choice ends in disgrace and ruin. The higher choice brings the blessing of God and the rewards of right-doing. Seek the world and lose it. Surrender it and gain it back, with God and heaven besides. Abraham, left on the barren hills, with honor and faith, now counts his posterity and numbers his possessions by the shining worlds in God's great universe, as viewed from the Eternal City of Light, whose golden streets he treads.

The angels hastened the lingering Lot. Young friend, hovering around your path is God's good angel of Mercy, with whispers of entreaty and influences of love. Feel you not the pressure of that spirit hand grasping yours in loving solicitude? Hear you not that gentle, earnest voice whispering now in your ear, "Escape, haste, flee for thy life?" O, heed that heavenly voice! Look not behind on the tempting pleasures of sin. Tarry not in all the plain of worldly promise. The storm of death and doom sweeps on apace.

The mountains of safety invite you to their secure and serene heights. And loftier heights beyond glow in the light of promise. On, on, with unfaltering step and unwavering faith, till the "Well done" of the Master and the welcome of the redeemed greet you, safe in the Celestial Eden.

RUTH
THE TRUE-HEARTED.

"Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."—PROVERBS.

"I have often fancied that the main scheme of the world is to create tenderness in man."—ARTHUR HELPS.

"Pray heaven for a human heart."—TENNYSON.

**"I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament."—SHAKESPEARE.**

"As the eagle flies high above the highest mountains, so does true love above struggling duty."—RICHTER.

" And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."—RUTH i, 16, 17.

WHEN Benjamin Franklin was United States Minister at the court of France, on one occasion he was passing an evening with a company of literary ladies and gentlemen, and the conversation turning on Oriental life, he read to them the story of Ruth. Charmed with its beautiful simplicity, with enthusiastic expressions of delight, they eagerly desired to know in what volume the exquisite pastoral was found. It was not a little to the surprise and chagrin of these French lords and ladies to learn that it was a portion of the sacred Scriptures that had elicited their admiration.

As a purely literary production this simple idyl is a gem. How chastely beautiful, how natural and winsome, is the character of Ruth! There is a fascination in her honest simplicity and depth of affection

which you cannot resist. The entire history has for us the interest of romance and the instructiveness of inspired truth.

The whole scene lies amid the commonest walks of humble life, and its lessons are for us who tread these crowded paths. There is nothing in the sphere which this young heroine of Scripture fills to exalt her above the ordinary woman of our Christian congregations. Whatever there is worthy in her character is within reach of the humblest among the daughters of humanity.

Let us hastily glance at the simple record of her life. Our first glimpse of this Moabitish damsel is in the full blush of young womanhood. There she stands, at the marriage altar, a youthful bride, holding lovingly the strong hand of the young Hebrew, Mahlon, and pledging to him the devotion of a true woman's heart, until death shall separate them. A happy pair are those newly wedded ones, standing there in the light of hope, shining down the vista of the golden years of promise.

Mahlon was the son of Elimelech the Israelite, who, driven by famine, had left the hills of his native Bethlehem, and with his wife, Naomi, and two sons had sought a new home in the land of Moab. There Elimelech, instead of finding a fortune, found an early grave, leaving Naomi in sad widowhood in a strange land.

The two sons became enamored of two of Moab's fair daughters, and married—Chilion took Orpah for a wife, and Mahlon the lovely Ruth.

Of Ruth's parentage we know nothing. The Talmud says she was the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab. Whether this be true or not, she possessed the qualities of a genuine princess. And yet she was an idolater, worshiping, in all honesty, at the shrine of the god Chemosh, and dancing around the altars of heathen deities. How ill-adapted to develop those high traits of character which she exhibited were her early training and religion, when compared with the pure religion of Jesus and the surroundings of *your* Christian home?

In God's providence, this fair flower of a heathen land was taken to bloom under the genial sun of a truer and more cheering faith. But not amid the scenes of domestic bliss and sunny hours of communion with the fondly loved alone is *her* character or *yours* to find its most perfect development. Ten happy years of life, cheered and charmed by the companionship of her husband, pass too quickly away; and then comes what, alas! so often comes to homes of love and happiness, the dark specter of death. Mahlon, the husband of her love, dies; and Chilion, the brother, dies. So false are life's fairest promises, so baseless, its fondest earth-born hopes! Now, there sit in that one family circle three desolate

widows. Over their hearts sweep the terrible blasts of a seemingly cruel fate; down their faces fall the tears of grieving love. What wonder that Naomi, bereft of husband and sons, should think of her own loved Bethlehem, and sigh to return to its familiar scenes and the friends of other days?

Thitherward she commences her journey, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, who propose to cleave to her. But when Naomi reflects more seriously on the hopeless prospect before the two young women, if they link their fortunes to hers, with a loving regard for their welfare she advises them to return, each to her own mother's house, where plenty and comfort await them, rather than to share her poverty. Orpah, after a passionate declaration of her devotion and a farewell kiss, goes back to her people and to her gods. Ruth, with a finer nature and a truer love, avows her unchangeable purpose to share Naomi's fortunes even until death.

Naomi and Ruth pursue their weary journey across the rapid river Arnon, along the shore of the Dead Sea, over the ford of the Jordan, plucking, perchance, the oleander and the myrtle from its banks, by the ruins of Jericho, over rugged hills and through deep ravines, until at length the dwellings of Bethlehem appear to their eager view.

The return of Naomi is quickly noised about among her former neighbors, who greet her with a

kindly welcome. She is soon settled in a humble abode—an abode of poverty and sorrow, it is true, but lightened by the sweets of love and the joys of faith in God.

It is harvest time, and Ruth sees the Hebrew maidens going to the harvest fields to glean, as was the law and the custom for the poor of Israel. With an eagerness to render any possible assistance to her mother-in-law, she proposes to take her chances among the gleaners. Naomi assents. Passing out of the city gate with trembling hope, not knowing whither to direct her feet, she enters a field where the harvesters are gathering the ripened grain, and all day long, with diligent hand, gathers what the reapers leave. The owner of this field is the lordly Boaz, a man of an exalted character too seldom met with; he is rich in lands, and richer in the qualities of a noble nature; courteous and pious, he walks among his laborers, greeting them respectfully with the pious salutation, "The Lord be with you;" to which they respond with equal piety and respect, "The Lord bless thee." A charming picture is this of rural life, an example of intercourse between employers and employes, and between all classes, well worthy of imitation.

The eye of Boaz falls upon the diligent, modest gleaner, and he inquires of his servant who she is. When he learns that she is Ruth, the daughter-in-law

of Naomi, he speaks kind words to her, bids her go to no other fields but his own, and to quench her thirst from the leathern bottles of his men. The gentle Ruth gratefully acknowledges his kindness, and modestly responds, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" Boaz answers that her self-sacrifice in forsaking her own kindred, and her affectionate devotion to her mother-in-law, Naomi, are all known to him, and adds: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." This word of appreciation and merited approbation is to Ruth like cold water to one perishing with thirst. To be honestly commended for well-doing is a joy so delicious and so cheap that one cannot but wonder why this sweet cup of blessing is so seldom pressed to the lips that are thirsting for the refreshing cordial. How many a heart is fainting for this sweet word of deserved praise?

Boaz adds considerate acts to kind words, giving Ruth refreshments, and bidding his reapers treat her kindly and drop whole "handfuls" of the grain purposely for the worthy gleaner.

With light heart and elastic step, though laden with an ephah, or more than a bushel, of grain, she returns at night and reports to Naomi her success and the kind treatment she had received from Boaz.

This was a cause of special gratification to Naomi, because, as she informed Ruth, Boaz was a near kinsman of her husband. This marked kindness on the part of Boaz awakened hopes in the bosom of Naomi that he would fulfill the duty of the nearest of kin, and marry her beloved Ruth. It was not strange, therefore, that she should seek to bring about so desirable a consummation. If the means she employed appear questionable to us, we should remember how far removed the whole scene is from the civilization of our day, and how inexplicable and oftentimes repellent the customs of one age and nation seem to those of a later age and on the opposite side of the globe.

Among the Hebrew people marriage was regarded with universal desire. The perpetuating of the family name and inheritance was with them a paramount object. Hence it was enacted by statute that when a man died, leaving a wife without children, his brother or nearest relative should marry the widow. To refuse to do this was an act of reproach, and the person thus refusing was publicly disgraced. The duty then devolved upon the next of kin.

Remembering this custom, we can readily see how natural was the anxiety of Naomi that the revered name of her family should be perpetuated by one so distinguished in Israel as her devout kinsman, Boaz, and that her own loved Ruth should be wedded to so

worthy a man. One cannot wonder at the anxiety of the mothers of our own time concerning their daughters' future husbands, when he sees the character of so many who assume the marriage relation, and the sad consequences that follow.

Besides, the well-known virtue and piety of Boaz were sufficient ground for the perfect confidence which Naomi placed in him.

The part which Ruth herself takes in the transaction is characterized by the utmost delicacy and modesty. Boaz himself bears willing testimony to her purity and true womanly bearing. And as a result he takes her to his heart and home, and makes her his honored wife.

It is a joyous occasion to all; but no one is more happy than the aged Naomi. Boaz purchases all the former possessions of her husband, Elimelech, and of her two loved sons, and honors the name of the revered dead. All the people and the elders pronounce their benediction on the wedded pair. And to Naomi they speak words of comfort and congratulation.

Leaving Ruth in her new home, where plenty crowns the board and love fills the house with its grateful aroma, let us go back in the history and glance at some of the qualities of her character most estimable and worthy of imitation.

That strong and brave decision on the hills of her native Moab, where she resolves to cling to her aged

and sorrow-stricken mother-in-law, reveals a character of no ordinary quality. There is in her what, for want of a better phrase, I must call *Depth of Nature*. Her character is rooted in a deep, rich soil of true humanity. Many natures are truthfully characterized by our Saviour as lacking depth. They are like the thin layer of earth covering the hard rock which lies just under the deceptive surface. Shallow and superficial, nothing ever penetrates them deeply, and in them no worthy fruit is ever brought to perfection.

I will not say that such shallowness of nature is more common to woman than to man; this would not be true. But it *is* true, and complimentary to her sex, that this defect is more noticeable and more seriously felt when found in woman than in man. A woman whose whole being is on the surface, who has no hidden deeps of feeling and thought and aspiration and love—a tree decked with showy blossoms, but never hung with golden fruit—is felt to be false to her true nature and Heaven-appointed mission. Ruth reveals to us a character nourished and strengthened from the unseen depths of an affluent nature which we love to associate with woman. The shallow woman exhibits no such heroism as that of Ruth.

Here, too, we discover in her that most essential characteristic of a true woman—*Heart*. She thinks and speaks and acts like one whose inspiring life-force is a heart aglow with the fires of feeling, throbbing

with the pulsations of love and beneficence; and her whole outward life is but the spontaneous outflow of this full, fresh fountain within.

A nature thus endowed and animated is rich in its own resources, and bestows its abundant benefactions upon all who come within its charmed sphere. The heart is the true regulator and benefactor of life. It is pitiful to see—as we too often must see—this greatest power of the true woman usurped, and *Art* sitting on the throne where Heart alone should reign. And yet how many there are whose entire life is under the dominion of this usurper! Nothing is done from honest impulse; nothing is ingenuous, frank, hearty. A manifest self-consciousness marks their entire bearing, and painfully reveals the fact that they are on exhibition. Art regulates the dress, the carriage, the churchly, the social, and even the domestic life. Art makes the *unfriendly* and *unsocial* call; you feel its frigid touch in the half-shake of the hand; you see its icy gleam in the simulated smile on the face; you hear its falsetto tones in the flippant talk; its chilling breath freezes you, and you sigh for a warmer atmosphere. It is the cold twinkling of a distant star, and not the warm, cheering beams of the glowing sun.

Sometimes it is not Art, but *Intellect*, that is the usurper of Heart. More sensible is its reign, but scarcely less frigid and fruitless of blessing. The only inspiration of the life with such is intellectual;

the nature is fed—or rather starved—on cold, intellectual pabulum, valuable, indeed, in its place, but worse than valueless when substituted for the higher food for which the heart hungers.

Sometimes neither Art nor Intellect predominates, but the throne which the heart should occupy is held by the ungracious goddess of Stoicism—a stolid form, which no prayer can move to sympathy, and from which no loving word ever proceeds.

How desolate is the nature over which either of these three false powers presides! How impoverished is every life encompassed by the chilling atmosphere of such a nature! On the other hand, how enriched are all they who breathe the genial air which surrounds one with a nature like that of Ruth, in which the Heart sits queen on her rightful throne, and dispenses her regal gifts to all.

Hence the importance of true heart-culture in education. The neglect of this essential part of genuine culture, and the giving of exclusive attention to the intellect, is one of the most perilous tendencies of this age. Such a process may produce a Lucretia Borgia in one sphere, and a George Eliot in another; but a Madame Guyon, a Mary Lyon, and an Elizabeth Fry will seldom or never come forth to bless mankind under its false reign. It is Madame De Staël who wisely says that “life is valuable only so far as it serves for the religious education of the heart.”

Let us note another feature in the character of Ruth. *Devoted affection* like that of this young Moabitess to her aged mother-in-law deserves our highest tribute. Naomi was poor, and could promise her nothing for the future. Her words to the two young women imply that if they would remain among the familiar scenes of their own loved mountains, a home of ample comfort and a future of bright promise awaited them. But with Ruth, the love of her deep, true heart responded to every persuasive argument of Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee." There is an utter unselfishness in this devotion that is beautiful to contemplate.

There *is* a love which is more passionate than self-forgetful. It burns with a self-consuming fire because it is not free from the base alloy of self. It gives something, but it exacts much, and seldom makes its subject or its object happy, but often wretched.

There is a higher and purer love, heaven-born and heaven-fed, which gives, but asks nothing for its own sake, content to be its own reward. A selfish, exacting, suspicious passion, misnamed love, is the curse of its possessor; a love pure and unselfish is the perpetual joy of the heart in which it glows, and of all who feel its divine warmth.

Contrast these two daughters-in-law of Naomi. Similarly situated, how widely different their conduct. Orpah breaks forth in passionate expressions

of attachment ; but her nature is not so deep, her love not so true, as that of Ruth. Like many another, she is easily persuaded, sometimes toward the good and true, but oftener in the direction of self-gratification. The persuasion of Naomi appealing to self-interest conquers Orpah's devotion. Ruth stands unmoved, with a firmness of decision that marks her strength of character and depth of affection.

Orpah can speak loving words ; Ruth can do heroic deeds. Orpah can cry and grieve, and give the cheap kiss of farewell ; Ruth can endure and sacrifice and abide, with cheering words and sunny smile and unselfish acts, to lighten the burdens of a smitten heart. Her own true heart gave her to see—what perhaps Orpah did not understand—the true meaning of Naomi's words ; that while she loved them so unselfishly as to desire them to consult their own interests, she, nevertheless, did inwardly long for their companionship.

A selfish person cannot interpret unselfish love. Two hearts must be in happy accord to read the meaning of each aright. There is a large part of society that never does and never can understand genuine unselfish natures. Those who live under the same sky do not by necessity live in the same world. Blessed are they who can discern and feel true goodness. Blessed are those homes where true-hearted Ruths preside and Love reigns, goddess of the happy

home circle. Blessed are those women, found in every sphere of life, who, like angels of light, accompany the stricken sons of men, to illumine the darkness of their ways, to sweeten the sorrows of life's cup of bitterness, to share the burdens too heavy to be borne alone, and to sing the cheering song of hope in the night of desponding gloom.

Yes, it is heart-power, and not any other force, that is most impressive and most enduring, even in this unappreciative world. I recall a pleasant visit, made one summer's day, to the favorite residence of Josephine, in the quiet palace of Malmaison, a few miles from Paris. Her gentle, patient love, exhibited through melancholy years of suffering and injustice, seemed to hallow the place. I wandered through her apartments, saw the embroidery wrought by her hands, swept my fingers over the harp with which she solaced her sad hours, lingered in the circular chamber in which the unhappy empress bade farewell to earth.

From that pleasant spot, around which such a strange charm seemed to hang, I walked thoughtfully and slowly along a shaded path to the little unpretending church in the adjoining village of Rueil, where in undisturbed repose rest the remains of Josephine. On the monument of this true woman were wreaths of *immortelle*, placed there—as we were assured by the attendant—by the hands of Napoleon's veteran soldiers. Call it weakness, or sentiment, if

you will, that moistened the eyes in the presence of that quiet scene, as the vision of those horny-handed heroes of many a battle, honoring the memory of the gentle and loving empress, passed before me.

Courage pays its devotion at the shrine of suffering love; physical force surrenders to the higher power of the heart. The lofty column Vendôme erected as a monument of Napoleon's splendid victories, and composed of cannon captured by him in battles, is laid prostrate by the devastating hand of the Commune; but the tomb of Josephine wears undisturbed its wreaths of honor and affection.

Standing amid these impressive historic illustrations, meditating on the strong contrast between the regard of mankind for Napoleon the Great and for Josephine the Good, how forcibly came to my mind the words of Bonaparte himself concerning the two kingdoms of force and of love: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires; but upon what foundations did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him. I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth to become the food of worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and

adored, and which is extending over the whole earth !” We must rear monuments in human hearts, by true love and devotion to humanity, if we would live through succeeding ages.

The cheerful diligence with which Ruth applies herself to ministries in behalf of Naomi is a characteristic of true womanly nobility. Delicately trained, perhaps, and unaccustomed to severe physical labor, she yet shrinks from no service, however menial. She waits not to be urged. It is she herself who first proposes to go into the fields and engage in the humble task of gleaning, though the place and the employment are alike strange to her. She is not ashamed of honest work in the humblest sphere and of the most unpretending character.

There are many who will work if only the sphere be sufficiently exalted, the labor distinguished, and the reward abundant and immediate. They will reap the full harvest, but care not to glean the scattered ears. They forget that Christ hallowed and ennobled the most menial labor, and that it is the chief glory of any act that it is service to God or to men.

The position which woman occupies to-day under the elevating influence of Christianity and the growing spirit of equality is a matter of rejoicing among the best and most thoughtful minds in all classes. The new fields of labor that are opening to her, the widening spheres of influence which she is entering

and filling with highest credit to herself and with greatest benefit to mankind, cannot but awaken gratitude and kindle hope in the hearts of all true philanthropists. But in the abundant harvest-fields that are inviting woman's beneficent labor, in our age, she will have need to be patient if her work often still seems to be more that of gleanings than of reaping. She must not forget the real greatness and the true glory which belong to the one as well as to the other.

The world is probably more in need of gleaners than of reapers. Blessed are the humble Ruths who will glean in any field of duty; who, if they cannot preach a sermon, or write a book, or deliver an eloquent address, or preside over an efficient organization, will cheerfully read the newspaper to a blind grandfather, take a flower to a sick girl, or a loaf of bread to a poor and suffering family, or devote their hours to the training of their own children and the blessing of their own domestic circles.

“If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheaves,
Many a grain, both ripe and golden,
Will the careless reapers leave;
Go and glean among the briars,
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that their shadow
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

“If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true,

If, where fire and smoke are thickest,
There's no work for you to do;
When the battle-field is silent,
You can go with cheerful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

"If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready to command,
If you cannot toward the needy
Reach an ever-open hand;
You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep;
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess;
She will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere."

The crowning grace of Ruth's character, as it is that of every other human being, is her *piety*. Love to man is crowned and glorified by love to God. It is not alone her undying attachment to Naomi that is expressed in those inimitable words of decision: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Educated to the worship of a heathen deity she had seen the superiority of the

Hebrew's God to the god of Moab, and the purer character of the Hebrew's faith. The pure example of the living, the serene trust of the dying, had left their indelible impress on her mind, and she, too, would be a worshiper of the true God—Jehovah. Back to pagan idolatry she will not go. Poverty and toil in a strange land, with the sublime joys of a heart whose rest is in God, are better than riches and ease with a restless heart unblessed by fellowship with the Most High.

Sadly defective is that character which has strong love for earthly friends, but none for the better and heavenly Friend. The love that is but earthly is Jacob's ladder prostrate on the ground; the love whose source and supreme object is above is that ladder with one end on the earth and the other in heaven, and the angels of God descending and ascending in blessed ministries. Heaven and earth must be thus linked together to render our life restful and lustrous.

And now, friends, let the study of this simple but true and lovable character incite you to emulate the virtues of Ruth the True-Hearted.

Let that strong purpose to cleave to Naomi and her people be a type of your firm resolve to link your fortunes with Christ and his Church.

Remember how from that one seed-act of decision sprung a golden harvest of blessing, covering all the

after-years of her life on earth and in the other country. God gave her the rich rewards of his providence and grace—a happy home, an honored name, a useful life. She became the ancestress of David and of Christ, the king of men. So do the destinies of time and of eternity hang on the decision which you are called to make.

Make your choice, saying to the Church of the living Jehovah, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;” cleave to this holy purpose through all the varying fortunes of life, and your feet shall be guided through harvest fields waving with the ripened grain of Providence, until at last they shall tread the illumined hills of the heavenly Canaan.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
THE COURAGEOUS MAN.

"We measure great men by their character, not by their success."
—NEPOS.

**"He that feeds men serveth few ;
He serves all who dares be true."—EMERSON.**

**"There are martyrs that miss the palm, but not the stake ; heroes
without the laurel, and conquerors without the triumph."—SALA.**

**"The best Christian religious doctrine is the life of Christ ; and
after that, the sufferings and deaths of his followers."—RICHTER.**

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."—MATTHEW xi, 11.

MEN estimate greatness by a standard varying and false. It is something to know, from authority that is ultimate, what true greatness is. Here we have it concentered in the character of John the Baptist. Christ himself bears infallible testimony that as a man he stands among men without a superior. I take this to be spoken in respect to the essential qualities of his character. It is worth our while, then, to look with studious gaze upon this portrait which calls forth such high commendation from the Divine Man. And if, as we look at this type of manliness and true greatness, we shall feel its transforming influence upon our characters, lifting them to the same exalted sphere, happy shall we be.

I. *The outward history* of John the Baptist's life may be quickly traversed. There were some strange scenes connected with his birth, which invested the child with unusual interest and awakened high expectations in the minds of his parents. His father,

Zacharias, was a minister, attending to the holy duties of the temple, and his mother, Elizabeth, was a woman of rare religious devotion. The boy's first breath was, therefore, in an atmosphere redolent of piety. The world loves to repeat its lying adage concerning the godless character of the children of ministers and pious people generally, but it is a stupendous falsehood, with here and there a sad exception. The general fact is, the more godly the parents the better the children will be.

John was the second cousin of Jesus, older by six months, and from his birth was regarded as sustaining a mysterious and faintly-understood relation to the Messiah—"Prophet of the Highest," forerunner of the long-promised One.

He was educated under the strictest *régime*. A Nazarite, consecrated to a life of peculiar self-denial, his character was formed in a mold of the most rigid severity of discipline. His food was of the simplest character, his dress of the plainest make. No drop of wine or strong drink ever passed his lips. And, like Daniel in Babylon, he flourished marvelously under this regimen. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit."

Whether or not his father died, leaving him an orphan in his youth, we do not know. We only know that, following his natural temperament, and as a preparation for the sacred duties of the priesthood, which he

designed to enter, he secluded himself from society for a season, and retired to that wild desert region on the western border of the Dead Sea. How long he remained there before he commenced his active ministry the sacred history does not inform us. He was preparing for his holy mission, and soon this mysterious light of the desert flashed its radiance over all Palestine.

We next see him as the mighty preacher and prophet of the wilderness. A strange figure was that of this mystical man, living apart from his fellows in that desolate region, clad in the costume of the old prophets—a garment woven of camel's hair, bound about the body by a leathern girdle; eating the spontaneous products of the desert, locusts and wild honey.

Yet the multitudes rush out from the cities and villages to hear the voice of this strong-spoken man, who thunders in their ears the solemn words, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." They hear and apparently heed his message, and on the banks of the Jordan he administers the rite of baptism to gathering crowds as a sign of their repentance.

One day, while John is administering this sacred rite to the thronging multitudes, Jesus comes to him to receive the solemn ordinance from his hands. He shrinks from such a demand coming from this "mightier" One, whose sandals he feels that he is not worthy to unstrap; but reluctantly he yields.

The holy Son of the Highest is thus inducted into his ministerial work. John bears willing testimony to his superior character. Henceforth the one is to "increase," the other, to "decrease."

Not long after this, John's active ministry is brought to a sudden termination. He had been fearless in his denunciation of sin among all classes. A licentious king now crosses his path, and receives a just rebuke for his evil-doing from this bold preacher. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, had recently married Herodias, the self-divorced wife of his brother, Philip, while yet his own wife was living. For this open violation of the divine law of marriage John reproves this wicked king, face to face. This prophet of God is evidently no advocate of the modern free-love theories and lax sentiments concerning the sacred character of the marriage relation. Did he live to-day he would thunder his scathing anathemas in the ears of the violators of this most holy bond. But he pays the price of his fidelity, and is cast into a prisoner's cell in the castle of Machærus, a fortress on the north-eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

II. Let us leave him there in that gloomy dungeon for a time, while we ponder a little more attentively the qualities of that great-souled man, which elicited such merited commendation from the Perfect One.

The first element in this character which deserves our attention is its *robust strength*. It is no "reed," like those delicate, pithy calamus stalks on the banks of the Jordan, shivering and swaying in the passing breeze; it is rather the strong and stately cedar of Lebanon, with roots firmly planted in the heart of the mountain. His is no effeminate soul, such as dwells beneath the "soft raiment" of many a richly clad and fair-seeming man, whom the world flatters and honors. Beneath that uncouth exterior is hidden a stalwart soul—a noble, manly character. This is the meaning of Christ's testimony to John's disciples.

He was a *man*, in the grandest sense of that strong Saxon word, and no showy pretense or mere sham, such as men sometimes put the prefix *gentle* to, and hail as "*gentleman*." There was a stalwartness and stability in that firmly knit character, typified by the rock-ribbed mountains, in whose cooling shadows he stood and uttered his strong, bold words in the ears of wondering men. No outward circumstances could conquer that robust soul. No vacillating multitude could turn the strong current of his purpose; no promise of ease or gain could tempt him to be false to his deepest convictions of right; no fear of prison or death could hush to silence the word that needed to be uttered.

This is an element of true greatness. *Such an individuality and solidity of character as cannot be*

absorbed or swayed by the popular mass. He is the great man who is borne along by no outward current, but impelled by the might of his inner convictions; who is molded not by the spirit of the times, but stamps his *own spirit* upon the times; who is not the creature, but the creator, of public sentiment.

There is no element of character in which the men of our time are more liable to be defective—none which our young men have greater need to cultivate. Our modern civilization tends to effeminateness. Laxity of parental training and government, enervating social habits, luxury and license, disrespect for God's Sabbaths and sanctuaries, skeptical questionings of the old and long-accepted truths of Christianity—these and other causes are operating among our youth to produce a character as unlike that of John's as the bending willow quivering in the zephyr is unlike the giant tree of the Yosemite Valley.

Culture of a certain sort we have, and what society is pleased to call elegant manners, but downright sturdiness and strength of character, like that of the Baptist and Daniel and Elijah and Paul, is too rare in the social circles of the nineteenth century.

Closely allied to this feature of John's character, and co-ordinate with it, was the highest order of *courage*. If there be any one quality of manhood which, above all others, puts the crown of honor

on a man's head, and the scepter of kingliness in his hand, and stamps him with the royal seal of greatness, I hold that quality to be *true moral courage*.

And I do not speak of courage as an abstraction—that beautiful, visionary, heavenly thing which all men praise, but few harbor, in the soul's sanctuary. I speak of courage that has a living form and substance; that is wrought into the words and deeds of daily life; that dares to combat wrong though that wrong be concentered in the conduct of a friend; that dares to rebuke sin though the sinner be held in high esteem; that is bold to speak its unconquerable convictions though every friend counsel silence; that, drawing its inspiration from on high, stands in solitary might, firm as the mountains of God, amid the fierce blasts of opposition, and in the very face of ostracism or of death.

Such heroic courage John the Baptist possessed. He exhibited it in the faithful discharge of his full duty to all men coming within the sphere of his influence.

As a *preacher*, he is a model of fidelity for all who fill the ministerial office. To every class and individual he speaks the appropriate word. He is no generalizer, mouthing thundering words about *sin*, but silent concerning *sins*. He hurls no thunderbolts at sinners in the mass, while very careful not to hit the individual sinner. To the extortionate tax-

gatherer he says, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." To the lawless soldiery he says, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." To Pharisee and Sadducee he gives warning and counsel; to all he cries, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." Such is the preaching urgently needed to-day to stir the slumbering consciences of men.

It is an easy thing to preach temperance to a congregation of teetotalers; to soar aloft on the wings of that much-abused bird of liberty before a Fourth-of-July audience of rabid republicans; to descant on the power of the Holy Ghost in the midst of a congregation of old-time shouting Christians; to discourse concerning the dignity of wealth to a company of millionaires; to rain fire and brimstone on heretics in the presence of believers; but to do as John did, *aim straight at the men who sit before you*—preach temperance to tipplers; the paying of honest debts to men whose religion consists in shouting halleluias; the peril of wealth and the curse of covetousness to men of fortune; charity to bigots; faith to foolish skeptics; making the application of every sermon, as Nathan did to David, crying, "Thou art the man"—this is the test of true courage. Such, and such only, are God's true preachers. And such only, in unpriestly ranks, as have this spirit, bear the marks of true manhood.

But John had even higher courage than this. He could deal thus faithfully with a friend in the more private walks of social life. John, the fearless preacher, on the banks of the Jordan, is not so great as John the rebuker of Herod, probably within the halls of his own palace.

Recall the circumstances. Herod is brought into contact with this popular preacher; he is impressed for the time, as wicked men often are, with the truth he utters and the bearing of the man. John acquires a strong influence over Herod; he is feared, respected, listened to with pleasure. But he sees this ruler's guilty life. Shall he be silent? This is the counsel of expediency. This is the advice of friends, who also call themselves friends of virtue and religion. "Hold fast to his favor; keep the influence of his great name. Besides, to speak will be in vain. You can hope to effect no reformation. You only let go your hold upon him and imperil your own life." These are the seductive voices and subtle influences that would charm those lips to silence. These are the insidious forces that conquer pusillanimous souls, in like circumstances, the world over, through all time.

But what is their effect upon this strong-textured man? The sighing breeze could hush the mighty ocean's roar as soon. He stands before this titled ruler with this calm, bold, faithful utterance, "It is not lawful for thee to have another man's wife."

That was the one triumphant moment of John's life. It culminated there in a grandeur whose glory streams down the ages and floods the whole earth. Had he yielded to the clamor of pusillanimity for petty favor and momentary influence, his name and memory had sunk to unknown depths beneath the floods of following years. One such heroic act gives a man influence more potent, honor more imperishable, than a thousand years of temporizing cowardice. What though in outward form it cost him his liberty and his life? *It gave him true freedom and immortality.*

Ah, friends, if in the study of this manly character we may but learn to *imitate* his rare courage, unsullied honor, and unswerving faithfulness, *our life* shall take on a nobler and diviner form. Then shall we learn to *live the truth*, and not merely to pet it with honeyed phrases. *Truth of speech, truth of heart, truth of life*—this is what exalts our race and imparadises our earth. O for the living embodiments of truth! Who does not grow sick at heart over the insincerity, the untruthfulness, the sycophantic cowardliness of men? The flattering speech, the deceptive smile, and the base stab in the dark, or the equally ignoble silence, when honor calls for the word of defense, the double face, the timorous shirking of responsibility when duty's voice is clear and loud—these are the things that make a man lose

faith in humanity, and sigh for the reviving breath of a purer atmosphere. With what inexpressible longing and admiration of heart does one turn from these to a character like that of John, true as the needle to the pole.

Another element in the character of this strong man, found always associated with the highest greatness, was his marked *humility*. He accepted his own divinely-appointed sphere in life, and humbly acquiesced in all its burdens and deprivations.

Borne on the crested wave of popular enthusiasm, as he is, the multitude are ready to put any wreath of honor on his brow. His fame fills the land. The learned Pharisees and priests send a delegation to him, and inquire if he is really the Christ? "No," is his ready reply. "Are you Elijah, or one of the old prophets?" "No," he again bluntly responds; "I am nothing but a voice; a herald proclaiming the coming one—the Messiah of prophecy and of promise. Pay *me* no honors. Honor and follow *him*." This is a summit of greatness to which few of Adam's race attain—to reject proffered honors, and hide *one's self* in the shadow of the Mightier One.

There is, moreover, in the life of this rare man, such genuine *unselfishness* as seldom relieves the character of our self-seeking humanity. It is not easy for men to yield to another an honored position, which they have held, even when age and infirmity

force them to the surrender. Few are the men who can gracefully retire from the popular notice and favor, saying with inward peace concerning a rival or successor, to whom all eyes are turned, "*He* must increase, but *I* must decrease."

The fame of Leonardo da Vinci at one time filled all Italy. His *chef-d'œuvre*, "The Last Supper," in the convent of the Church of San Maria delle Gracia at Milan, is to-day the admiration of the world. When the weight of advancing years was sitting on this gifted son of genius he was invited by the Grand Council of Florence to decorate the Council Hall of that city with pictures. He dreamed not that there was in all Italy an artist who would dare to enter into competition with him. But Pierre Soderini, who had seen some of young Michael Angelo's productions, invited this young artist to take charge of the sides of the hall. He accepted the invitation. Both painters secretly prepared their cartoons and submitted them to the judges chosen to examine them. Leonardo's were superb; but those of Michael Angelo filled the astonished judges with admiration, and they burst forth into enthusiastic acclamations of praise. The quick ear of Leonardo caught this cruel word, whispered by a member of the Council in the ear of a neighbor: "Leonardo is growing old." It was the death-knell of happiness in the soul of that illustrious artist. His past glory was nothing. It

was nothing that his cartoons were ordered by the Council to be placed *beside* those of this new rising star, Michael Angelo. He would not be comforted, and, after wandering from city to city, died at last at the court of Francis I., in France, a broken-hearted man. Sad but true example this, of the world's best type of human character, and the emptiness of its highest honors.

How different the character of John the Baptist. In the very height of his fame, with all eyes directed toward him as the greatest prophet of the later ages, the leader of a strong and growing sect, he turns to another, and says to the multitudes, "Behold this man who is preferred before me; for he was before me. Withdraw your allegiance from me, and become *his* disciples. *He* must increase, but I must decrease." Well may the divine Christ say of such a one, "Among those born of women there hath not arisen a greater than" he.

III. And now let us return to this imprisoned son of greatness, and learn some lessons from his dungeon.

It is not strange that he is there. The prison has often been the home of earth's noblest sons and greatest heroes, from Joseph and Jeremiah through a long line of apostles and martyrs down to the latest champion of truth and freedom thus signally honored.

Look into that prison and learn that the highest type of character may co-exist with the severest outward

trial and inward struggle. It has seemed strange and contradictory to many, that a man of John's firmness and faith should send those two disciples of his to Jesus to ask him if he were indeed *the promised Messiah*. Commentators have sought to explain the seeming contradiction, by assuming that it was not for John's own sake that they were sent on this errand, but for the confirmation of the faith of these disciples; that *they* might be assured that Jesus was the very Christ.

To me there is nothing inconsistent in this conduct of John. Its very *naturalness* strengthens the sympathetic bond of brotherhood between him and us. Great souls are always subject to great inward throes. Is it strange that that ardent, restless nature should chafe under such a protracted season of enforced inactivity? Think of those long and weary months of idleness—shut in from the sight of men; cut off from his chosen work; passing tedious days and slowly dragging hours of night; apparently neglected, forgotten by that Holy One, whose most intimate friend and forerunner he was—and do you wonder that great, swelling tides of troubled emotion swept over that imprisoned soul?

Then, too, he hears that Christ is working miracles; raising even the dead to life. How natural that he should say to himself, "Why, then, does he not exert that mighty power for *my release*? Why not throw open these prison doors, and set *me* free from this

dreary, useless bondage? Can it be that he is the Son of God I truly believed him to be? And if he is, will it not be well to remind him that I am here, suffering for his sake?"

Ah, how many of us have known some such tempestuous hours of gloomy doubt, and inward strife, and agony of soul! And how have *we* marveled that the Power Supreme—Father and Brother—did not hasten to our relief!

It is something to know that a nature so strong and pure as that of John has been shaken by the same fearful gusts of trial. But it is something more and better to know that an earnest application to Christ will hush these storms of doubt and struggle. To every such troubled soul come the incontrovertible, supernatural *facts* concerning Christ and his Gospel. The history of Christianity—what it is, what it has done—this is enough to quench our doubts and calm our fears—a sure foundation for our heaven-high hopes. The message from Jesus re-establishes peace in John's agitated bosom.

And now the end is nigh. In those palace-halls the birthday of Herod is celebrated by grand festivities. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, trips lightly in the mazy dance, and the admiring king, in the folly of his intoxication, promises to grant her utmost request, to the half of his kingdom. Quickly consulting with her mother, that infamous woman bids her

daughter ask the head of John the Baptist. To such unfathomable depths of malicious wickedness woman-kind *can* sink. Herod keeps the rash promise, though he would gladly be released from it. In that very hour, as John's now placid mind is meditating of things unseen, his prison door creaks on its hinges, the executioner enters, and in a moment, opens for the waiting prisoner *another door*, through which his pure soul escapes from the dungeon cell of Machærus to the Celestial Palace.

Shed no tears over the sudden and shameful death of that heroic man. But weep for Herod, who thus basely sacrificed his best friend, and lost his supreme opportunity and his hope of salvation. And weep for yourselves, who, like Herod, spurn the better and choose the base; who prefer the cheating pleasures of earth to a life of duty, a death of triumph, a heaven of bliss.

Do you say, that lonely prison and bleeding head look little like success? And do you ask, "Is this the *model* for young men?" Yes. Here *is* success, the truest and the grandest ever achieved. John in the height of his active ministry speaks to the crowd; John beheaded speaks to the world, and is crowned the prince of men. Herod's name has come down the ages linked with infamy and shame. The fame of John marches through the centuries gathering fresh laurels from the successive generations of men.

I say not that the character of this great man was perfect. If so, it were not human. Jesus alone fills the perfect ideal. John was firm, true, manly, and courageous. Jesus was all this, and more—he was gentle and lovable, as well as strong.

A life to be illustrious need not be long. John died at about thirty-three years of age. A few years nobly lived may achieve a glorious record. We have need often to remind ourselves of the truth contained in the familiar lines of Bailey's "Festus :"

"We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

You, my friend, may die young, but need not die without a monument. But there is no time to squander in idle dreams or in fruitless pursuits, much less in sin.

Does not this thought sometimes haunt you, young friend, "What is there in my character or life, as yet, that is worthy, and that the world will love to remember?" Does not the solemn question sometimes force itself upon your thought, "What, if I were to die now; what record have I left? What character have I formed as a fitting temple for an immortal soul? What bridge of hope spans the abyss of death? What beacon-light illumines the shores of the unknown country?" Be it yours, this hour, to

rise on the wings of strong resolve, upborne by the ever-helpful Spirit of God, to a loftier plane of being, in which Christ shall be Copartner and Friend.

John lived in the dim twilight of that dawning day whose noontide glory floods your path. You may be great as was he in the strong elements of personal character, while your character may shine with the fuller light and lovelier grace of the "least in the kingdom of heaven."

THOMAS
THE HONEST SCEPTIC.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether
it be of God."—JESUS.

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!'
Light breaks in, peace settles on the air;
Lo! the prison walls are giving way—rise, let us go!"—BUSHNELL.

"Not Thou from us, O Lord, but we
Withdraw ourselves from thee."—TRENCH.

"If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee!"—WHITTIER.

"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."—JOHN xx, 27, 28.

L EONARDO DA VINCI'S incomparable picture of the "Last Supper" presents, in marked features, depicted on the faces of the twelve apostles, the striking variety of character in that representative disciple band. The distinguished painter but reveals facts in this masterly delineation of character. The world of humanity, with its various types of temperament and disposition, was in that chosen circle of the Saviour's standard-bearers. The loving John, the pragmatic James, the impetuous Peter, and the treacherous Judas were there; and there, too, was the skeptical Thomas, whose conflict and conquest furnish us a fruitful study, with many a valuable lesson for believer and doubter, in all time.

The fact seems every where forced upon us that the present age is seriously affected by one of those periodic attacks of questioning and doubt concerning religious matters to which the human race has ever

been subject. The lessons, therefore, which the subject legitimately teaches us are pre-eminently adapted to our day. Let us study them with candid mind and reverent spirit.

Looking at Thomas as the representative of a certain class of honest skeptics, we have presented to us, in his relations to the risen Christ, three distinct stages of experience; or rather, there are three acts in this life drama, of great and almost tragic interest:

I. We have the skeptic perplexed with his doubts.

II. The skeptic urged to investigate thoroughly the claims of Christ.

III. The skeptic convinced, and the Christian faith triumphantly established by incontrovertible proofs.

I. First, then, we see this struggling disciple wrestling with his doubts and overmastered by them.

Who is this doubter? Whence spring these troublesome doubts? The sacred record gives us but a few glimpses of Thomas, yet these reveal his character with striking distinctness and emphasis.

Called to the distinguished honor of an apostleship, he follows with fidelity, if not with fervor, the fortunes of the Prophet of Nazareth; not always, and perhaps never, understanding the mysterious God-man, nor catching the spiritual significance of those profound truths which habitually fell from his lips; yet he cleaved to the great Teacher until the bloody, culminating scene of Calvary, which so staggered his

faith as to shroud him in a midnight of distressing doubts—a darkness which seemed impervious to the light of the most convincing evidence.

The sad scene of the crucifixion and burial of their Master over, the other disciples meet together to cheer each other's sorrowing hearts. On the evening of the third day they are assembled in a room in Jerusalem, with closed doors—still trembling for fear of the persecuting Jews—when Jesus the risen Lord suddenly appears in the midst of the astonished beholders; he breathes his benediction of peace upon them, and bids them assure their troubled hearts with evidence that their crucified Leader still lives to lead them on to other and greater triumphs.

Joyfully they accept the indubitable proof. But Thomas—unhappy man—is not with his fellow-disciples on that auspicious occasion. They hasten to him with the glad tidings, but he will not believe. No testimony, even of trusted friends, can convince *him* of the truth of such a marvelous event; no evidence, save that of his own senses, and that of the most emphatic and unusual kind, shall satisfy his gloom-enshrouded soul, or dispel the doubts from his troubled mind.

Such is the attitude which he assumes as he is here introduced to us, in his questioning and almost defiant and impregnable position. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger

into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Sad and unreasonable man—how came he to be thus compassed and conquered by a legion of unrelenting doubts?

There are several types of skeptics with doubts and questionings concerning religion which spring from various causes.

There is the indifferent skeptic, too shallow-brained and frivolous ever to have given a serious hour to an honest, earnest investigation of the evidences on which the Christian faith rests; who prates ostentatiously of his unbelief, with the vanity of one who wishes to gain a little cheap notoriety. This class of professed doubters has always been large, but seems to be on the increase, especially as skepticism takes on a popular and fashionable form.

There is, also, the perverse skeptic, whose doubts take their rise in a heart corrupted, and a moral nature indurated by sin. Sin blunts the keener sensibilities of the soul, blinds the moral vision, paralyzes the faith-faculty, and not seldom curses its victim with bewildering doubts, when otherwise the light of heaven might shine with radiance on his path.

Pride of intellect also often dazes its possessor and leads him into many a tangled labyrinth of skeptical questionings, on the false and foolish assumption that he can *believe* nothing which he does not *understand*—a principle which would make any man question

his own being and the reality of every thing around him; question, indeed, his mental processes, and take to task his own foolish doubts, none of which he understands or can give any such account of as he demands for a subject of religious belief that is to receive his credence. For such doubts and doubters there is no cure but common sense and humility; a fair proportion of either of these essentials will open the blinded eye of faith to at least a partial view of that which cannot be fully comprehended, and a satisfying assurance of the verity of the spiritual and the infinite.

There is another class of skeptics who, let us believe, are honest and sincere, but who find it difficult to settle satisfactorily the great questions of religious belief, and struggle on, enveloped in clouds and burdened with many an anxious problem whose pressing weight gives the heart no rest. To this class belonged the apostle Thomas; and those who fight with him in the battle with harassing doubts may learn from him some lessons of trust and gain some new strength for the contest with this enemy of their peace—exactung unbelief.

Let us not be guilty of judging harshly such an honest questioner of truth, nor of treating with lightness his wrestlings of soul. Rather may we seek, with Christly charity, to help such a one into the clearer vision and firmer grasp of that truth which

alone brings rest and peace to troubled hearts. It is not a light thing to stand face to face with the transcendent questions relating to our destiny—the great mysteries of the unseen God and the future life; to feel the cold chills of doubt as to the verity of these invisible things creeping over the shivering and trembling soul. Happy is he who knows nothing of such fierce trials of his faith, such mighty wrestlings with the Angel of Hope, that he leave not the soul in its midnight of despair.

A brief analysis of the character of Thomas sheds light on the cause of his doubts and those of other doubters similarly constituted. He possessed a materialistic nature that lived chiefly in the realm of the seen and sensible; he was one of those men who demand mathematical proof for every thing believed, no matter whether the subject be susceptible of such proof or not. This trait is brought out vividly by John, in his account of the Saviour's valedictory discourse to his apostles, on that eventful night of his betrayal.

While Jesus is talking to them of his going away and coming again, saying, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," it is Thomas who interrupts him and thrusts in this matter-of-fact, undiscerning question, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" As much as to say, "We have not seen any way. We do not even

know where you are going, and how can we know about the way to a place until we know something more about the place itself? Tell us all about it in plain, literal terms."

This language reveals a striking feature in the character of Thomas as plainly as words can picture it. He belongs to that class of men who must see *every* step of the way before they venture to take *one* step. They naturally "walk" "by sight," and not at all "by faith." They must see every thing, or they will not believe; they must think every subject all through as clearly as a mathematical demonstration, or they cannot give it their credence.

The realms of feeling and of faith are departments of their nature vaguely defined, distrusted, and rarely cultivated. They have no wings of imagination, or ideality, or faith, and can never fly; nothing but feet, and must ever walk; therefore, they must always have a tangible and firm foundation beneath their feet, and a real, sensible light, making distinct every object in their path.

This was Thomas's mental characteristic. It would be incorrect to attribute to him superior intellectual qualities because of this feature of his mind, and to represent him—as he has frequently been represented by men who are usually more discriminating—as having the *reflective* faculties largely predominating. No. Such a class of persons may have many excellences,

and may sometimes possess in marked degree other attributes of greatness, but that peculiar characteristic does not indicate a mind of highest order. It is self-limiting rather than expansive; it is exacting rather than broad; it is confined to the material earth while it shuts out of view the vast and flaming worlds around and beyond us, with all their inspiring and ennobling objects of contemplation and of faith. Let no one, then, pride himself on having such a type of mind; but rather let him seek to subdue its materialistic perverseness, and train it to more comprehensive views and more exalted uses.

Thomas, also, possessed a melancholy temperament. His habit was to view the gloomy side of every subject. Another glimpse of this apostle, which the evangelist John gives us, brings out graphically this element of his nature. Persecuted and hunted down by the Jews, Jesus escapes to the region beyond the Jordan, accompanied by his disciples. While there he receives a message from Mary and Martha, the sisters of his friend Lazarus, informing him of their brother's serious sickness. Jesus proposes to return into Judea. The disciples remind him of the peril of placing himself within the power of the enraged Jews. But he is persistent in his purpose. Now, the sincere yet ever-desponding Thomas steps forward with his sad, but brave and manly, words, saying to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may

die with him." To his foreboding mind there was nothing but defeat and death ahead. He always had an eye to see the darkest picture that possibility could paint. He could see no possible way for his Master to escape the wrath of his enemies, and felt that he must fall a sacrifice to their malice. It did not occur to his ever-shadowed mind that he who could hush the stormy sea to silence, and heal the sick, and bring to life the dead, might resist the attacks of his enemies. No, he must die a victim of their rage.

But to his imperishable honor be it said that, if die his Master must, his was the fidelity to die with him. Here come out, in bold and bright relief, the nobler qualities of this true man. He was sincere, he was loyal, he was courageous. So far as his convictions were clear, he was true to them. So far as he understood duty, he hesitated not to tread its path, difficult and dangerous though it might be. For this quality of high honor and unwavering fidelity we cannot but feel our hearts drawn kindly toward him; we cannot wonder that the Saviour loved and pitied him.

Here, then, we have explained in the characteristic traits of Thomas one special cause of his harassing doubts. With such a mind and in such a mood he sadly, and perhaps silently, accompanied the Master, whom he so little understood, on that last journey to Jerusalem. It was hardly a surprise to him that Jesus should meet with just such a fate as befell him

there. But he followed him to the last; and when, on the hill of Calvary, he saw the loved form nailed to the bloody cross, which was to him the symbol of shame and utter defeat; when he beheld, with his own clear-seeing eyes, the pierced hands and feet, the wounded side and the streaming blood; when he heard the awful cry, "It is finished," and saw the lifeless body laid away in the sepulcher, it was an end of all hope with him. Expectation perished; the light of his life was quenched; in that dark grave, with the strange Man of Nazareth, whom he had believed to be at least a great prophet and a coming king, now lay buried all that he had loved and built his hopes upon.

And now came upon him, with all their fearful force, the horrible forebodings of that melancholy mind. A deceived and disappointed man, he had had enough of delusion. The associations connected with the sad event were all painful to him. Unlike his brother apostles, he shunned the company of his fellow-disciples and retired from view, cherishing in secret his own gloomy reflections.

Such is a portrait of Thomas before and after the crucifixion. And this explains the reason of his absence on the occasion of our Lord's first appearance to the eleven disciples. Like many another smitten child of sorrow and victim of depression, he wrongfully retires from society to dwell in the unilluminated

prison-house of his own beclouded and distempered mind.

Thus we see the skeptic battling with his unbelief, and wrapped in the mantle of night's impenetrable gloom.

How many a man shares with Thomas the darkness and the bitterness of agonizing doubt? How many have no Christ but an entombed Christ; no hope but a buried hope; no light but the faint, flickering torch of reason, which only serves to reveal the dark, abysmal depths that lie beyond its reach, but into which we all must plunge.

Let such follow the sad-hearted yet sincere Thomas another step in his experience and behold how a merciful Saviour treats an honest doubter.

II. *The second act reveals to us the skeptic invited to investigate thoroughly the claims of Christ and the foundations of the Christian faith.*

A week has passed since that never-to-be-forgotten evening when the first manifestation of the risen Christ to his assembled apostles made glad their hearts. Meanwhile they have perplexed the doubting Thomas with their assertions, and plied him with their entreaties. Once more they are gathered in that same room, now sacred to them; and this time, led by their loving persuasion, Thomas is with them. The door is shut as before. Possibly there is some expectation or hope that Jesus will honor the day which marked his resurrection—already held sacred

among his disciples—by again revealing himself to them. If any heart cherished such a hope it was not disappointed. Again, that well-remembered form stands suddenly revealed to them, and again the holy benediction, "Peace be unto you," falls in thrilling accents on their ears. A solemn hush fills the room and awes to silence every lip. All hearts swell with unutterable emotions, grateful for one more view of their risen Master for the confirmation of their own faith; grateful, also, that now their doubting and unrelenting brother, Thomas, may with his own eyes behold the transcendent sight. No word is spoken; none is needed. The Saviour knows the struggles of that doubt-burdened heart of Thomas's, and, turning his eyes with loving glance toward the skeptical disciple, he says, in words whose very tones carry resistless conviction to the heart, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

Look at that scene, skeptical friend, and learn the real attitude of Christ and of Christianity toward the doubter, from that day forward until now. Look at it, if you are honest in your doubts and earnest in your desire to know the truth, and learn what avenues invite you to satisfying evidence in presence of which the conflict shall be ended and the victory of faith triumphantly won.

This attitude of the compassionate Christ toward the skeptical Thomas is, I repeat, a true representation of the attitude which God and the Bible assume toward the honest investigator of truth, in all time.

Christianity invites investigation. Nothing could be further from the truth than the charge sometimes made against it, that it is dogmatic, unsympathetic, and exacting; demanding belief without reason, and hurling its harsh dogmas, with pitiless hand, at troubled mortals, only to smite them with despair. No, my friend, you have sadly misjudged the loving Christ and his tender messages to men, if thus you think of him or of his truth.

To-day, as on the day of that eventful appearance to Thomas, to you, as to that bewildered and questioning apostle, he turns with loving glance and benignant voice, saying, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands;" and "be not faithless, but believing."

It is not uncommon for modern unbelief to represent the adherents of Christianity as timid and fearful of honest investigation. There is either a vague supposition or, sometimes, a positive assumption that Christian believers are afraid to have the hand of science reached forth to touch the pierced body of Christ, lest the story of his resurrection should prove a myth and the unreal foundations of the Christian faith should glide from under the tottering structure

of superstition. Nothing, again I say, could be more untrue, nothing more unjust. No ; Christianity, in its very genius and spirit and historic development, does not *repel*, but *invites*, examination ; does not *fear*, but *challenges*, the most rigid scrutiny. That resurrection body of our Lord has been handled, rudely and roughly oftentimes, by the hands of questioning Philosophy, and skeptical Science, and ribald Infidelity, and respectable Liberalism, through all the Christian ages ; but it has never shrunk from the touch, nor vanished into unreality. On the contrary, it is acknowledged to-day, in infidel France, and rationalistic Germany, and materialistic America, and throughout the world, to be the most real, resistless, colossal, and unconquerable fact in the realm of human history.

Not only is the skeptic challenged to the most scrutinizing examination of the claims of Christianity, but he is furnished with the most convincing evidence of its truthfulness and divine origin.

He is not mocked with superstitious unrealities, nor bewildered with unmeaning mysteries, nor baffled by legions of unconquerable difficulties. If he be sincere in his search, reasonable in his demands, and humble in spirit, he shall find proof that no rational mind can reject. You cannot honestly examine these evidences but you will be forced to acknowledge to your own minds several important facts too often unrecognized by the doubter.

First, it is certain that the evidence offered is far more convincing than that demanded in respect to other matters which we daily accept, and in the acceptance of which great interests are involved; and secondly, that the evidence offered furnishes the most demonstrative proof of which the nature of the subject admits. The perverse skeptic demands impossibilities. He demands a kind of proof of which the subject is incapable—mathematical proof for moral subjects or questions of fact. He forgets, in his shallow philosophy, that moral proof is the *only proof possible in questions of fact*. And Christianity is a fact. The Bible is a fact.

You cannot demonstrate the truth of Christianity by mathematical formulas, but you can prove it by a higher form of evidence.

No mistake is greater, though sometimes made by men of scholastic pretensions, than the assumption that moral evidence is inferior to what is called mathematical, or to other kinds of evidence. A scholar ought never to be guilty of such a blunder. Yonder is a field; you say it contains an acre, and ask me to give you its value in cash. How do you know it contains an acre? You have measured it with the most perfect mathematical instruments; you have calculated its dimensions by the most exact mathematical rules and formulas. Very well. I do not hesitate to take your calculations and to purchase

your field, if I want it, and pay you its equivalent value in money, if I have it. I can stake a little *money* on such evidence as you furnish me; but I would not stake *my life* on it, much less *my soul*, with its deathless interests.

What positive assurance have I that your measurement is strictly correct? There never was an absolutely straight line drawn between two points; there never was a perfect instrument made by human hands; there never was a calculation made by man that was not liable to serious mistake. No, my friend, neither you nor I will commit any great or precious interest to the most complete mathematical evidence that the most perfect human skill ever presented, when applied to any question of fact.

Sooner far, when we thoughtfully consider the subject, will we intrust our highest and immortal interests to the higher evidence which Christ furnishes us of his resurrection power and the divinity of his holy and saving truth.

Nay, more: when we think of the multiplied, varied, concurrent, cumulative evidence of Christianity—evidence from prophecy and miracle; from testimony and experience; from harmony and adaptation; from history, sacred and profane; from monument and sculpture; from before the flood and since the ascension; from enemies and friends of truth; from more than sixty sacred books, written by some

forty inspired authors ; from millions of happy lives lived by believers in God, and millions of triumphant deaths, with shouts of victory and songs of triumph wafted back to listening ears, almost from the Invisible Land—when we see all these lines of evidence converging in one focal point, how can we fail to bow in adoring reverence before the truth so overwhelmingly proved, accept with joyous and worshiping hearts the Deity so convincingly presented to our hesitating faith, and exclaim with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!”

But the skeptic too often rejects all evidence, however convincing, prescribes his own unreasonable and impossible conditions, refuses to accept testimony, thus egotistically assuming that he is wiser and more discerning than many thousands of the wisest and most sagacious men the world has ever seen. Such was the position of Thomas, for a brief time, in assuming which he was blameworthy, though the subject of a sad temperament and a materialistic mind.

But Thomas also possessed redeeming qualities such as many a skeptic does not possess, and these qualities rescued him from the thralldom of tyrannizing doubt.

He was a *sincere* doubter ; he had proved himself a true friend and loyal subject of Christ ; and in his heart he was still loyal to him, if only he could believe that his buried Master had really risen from the dead. From such a heart, loyal to the truth and

yearning for the light, the risen Christ is never very far; to such a one shall surely come the revelation of the glorified Lord, to scatter doubt and bring the jubilee of exulting faith.

And this brings us to the third act in this historic drama of an honest doubter's life, in which we see,

III. *The skeptic convinced, and the great facts concerning Christ and Christianity triumphantly established.*

Let us go back to that ever-memorable room in Jerusalem where we left Thomas, with the words of Jesus falling, like the music of heaven, on his wondering ears. There he stands, at length, face to face with the veritable Jesus, whom he had sincerely believed to be lying in that garden sepulcher, hard by the cross on which he surely saw him die. There stands before his very eyes that same loved form whose pierced hands and bleeding side had made such an indelible impression upon his agonized mind that nothing could efface it. The unexpected vision fills him with surprise and overwhelms him with flooding emotions. The gentle look, the mild yet half-reproving voice, the inviting attitude of Jesus, completely disarm him. The great deeps of that true, yet beclouded and burdened, heart are broken up, and the tides of tender and joyful emotion rise and swell in his bosom, sweeping away his doubts and conquering the perverseness of his unbelieving mind.

In some way unknown to himself, he finds his exacting conditions strangely unloosing their hold upon him; he is breathing a new atmosphere, buoyant with hope; he is bathing in a flood of light which illumines and irradiates his entire being. He no longer cares to touch with his own hand the nail-prints and the spear-marks in his Master's body.

His heart is already overjoyed with all-satisfying evidence that it is the real Christ of Calvary. He falls adoringly at the feet of his restored Master, and with a faith so victorious that it seems to exceed that of the other apostles, exclaims, "*My Lord and my God!*"

O, happy Thomas, at last released from the tyranny and agony of an unbelieving heart! O, happy brother man, long burdened and wrestling with despairing doubts, who will *follow* Thomas, in like sincerity of heart, to the true and only source of relief—the revelation of the now ascended Lord to the spiritual eye of the truth-seeking soul! Such a revelation and such relief there are for you and for every honest doubter. Coming in the spirit of a devout seeker of truth you shall find evidence of the resurrection of Christ, and of the whole system of revealed truth, which your candor will not permit you to discard. You shall be confronted with facts more inexplicable to your incredulity than to your faith; facts which no theory or hypothesis can

explain ; facts in creation, in this world of sin, in human experience the world over, which nothing but God's revelation to man in Jesus Christ can make clear.

Mystery, is there ? Things strange and evading your comprehension ? Admit it. Where will you find freedom from the dominion of mystery ? Where will you find a key that will unlock so many of life's solemn mysteries as Christianity ? Life itself—its meaning and its end, its toils and its tears, its sin and its woe—death, the grave, the unknown hereafter—how will you solve these ever-recurring problems ? Where find light to illumine these dark, dread mysteries ? Where but with Thomas, beside that mighty Conqueror of death ?

There, in his holy presence, the fearful mystery of life and death is lifted from the soul ; the light that irradiates his sacred form covers with its halo the whole scene of this troubled life, penetrates into the gloom of the grave, and throws its beams far across the abyss of death into that unknown country toward which our pilgrim feet are rapidly traveling.

Think not to escape mystery by unbelief. Rather seek to interpret it by faith.

It is related in fabled story that the fearful Sphinx beset the highways near the ancient city of Thebes, seizing the passing traveler and propounding to him her perplexing riddle, failing to answer which immediate destruction awaited him. So ever, Sphinx-

like, destiny meets each traveler on the highway to the unknown hereafter and plies him with her bewildering problems which every one must solve for himself, or, failing, meet his melancholy doom.

And as the Thebans offered their kingdom to the man who would interpret the Sphinx's riddle, and Œdipus, a man of penetrating yet humble mind, solved the riddle and won the kingdom; so to him who with becoming humility and reverent spirit seeks to solve life's great mystery and escape the torturing hand of relentless Unbelief is given the wisdom which delivers, and dominion over this world and the world which lies beyond.

But this wisdom and this victory and dominion are attained only as, with Thomas, we bow before the ascended and ever-revealed Christ and accept *him* as our only Guide and Saviour.

To the attainment of such a faith and such a victory the doubt and triumph of Thomas may help us all. Thankful should we be, indeed, for the skepticism of this questioning apostle, since it brought to him and brings to us such irrefutable proof of the most stupendous fact in the domain of history. The testimony of this inveterate doubter ought to convince the most skeptical.

Are any of you, my friends, carrying the oppressive weight of a dark and troubled heart by reason of relentless doubts—questioning the great verities of the

Christian faith? Let the testimony of this honest skeptic come with its full convincing force to your heart. It is not the evidence of credulity, but of incredulity; not the verdict of an enthusiastic and unreasoning believer, but of an exacting, suspicious skeptic—of one who would not believe until forced by over-mastering evidence.

Learn a lesson from this brother skeptic. His doubts had a more reasonable basis than ours; and, assuring as was the evidence offered to him, still greater is the evidence, still firmer the foundation, on which our faith now rests.

The added centuries have but given us increased and cumulated evidence of Christ's divine power and Godhead, and strengthened the foundations of our holy Christianity. Hear, then, and heed the loving reproof of this long-suffering Man of Calvary. Examine the evidence so freely and abundantly proffered. Behold this once crucified but now glorified Redeemer, and hear him say to you, as to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing;" and, in response to this inviting word, surrendering yourself to the full force of overpowering evidence, to you shall come the supreme manifestation of the risen Christ, and with Thomas you may exclaim, in joyous victory of faith, "*My Lord and my God!*"

CORNELIUS
THE TRUTH-SEEKER.

"Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."—JESUS.

"Light is sown for the righteous."—PSALMS.

"Truth is the highest thing that man may keep."—CHAUCER.

"I thrive
On truth, whose sweetness keeps the soul
Vigorous and pure and good."—ANON.

"Dear Comforter! Eternal Love!
If thou wilt stay with me,
Of lowly thoughts and simple ways
I'll build a house for thee!"—FABER.

"There was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."—ACTS x, 1, 2.

HERE we have a man whose social position and religious relations are unlike those of any other of the subjects of our study; a man outside of the visible Church, yet possessing a character of such marked excellence as to be admired of men and approved of God. The peculiar personal virtue of Cornelius, together with the fact that he is regarded as the representative of a large class both in heathen and in Christian lands, and that he was the "first-fruit" gathered from the Gentiles into the Christian Church, give unusual interest to this historic personage as he stands related to the Gospel system, to the Church, and to the world.

I. Let us first look at the scriptural portraiture of his character. He was a Roman soldier, stationed in Cesarea, a city situated on the coast of the Mediterranean sea about thirty-two miles north of Joppa. This famous city, called by Josephus "the head of Judea,"

was built by Herod the Great, with vast expenditure. It was the official residence of the Roman procurators and the military head-quarters of the province. The Herodian kings also resided there with their stately court. Cornelius was officially residing in that city in command of a company of soldiers which was composed of Italians, and not, like many other bodies of soldiers, made up of provincial troops, and was therefore called the "Italian band."

Cornelius was a heathen by birth and state relations. But his heathen religion had not met the wants of his nature, and he had turned from it to the true God of the Jews.

He was devout; he revered the Supreme Being, and in his inmost soul paid him truest homage. This he might do as a sincere pagan; and in this devoutness and heart worship of the God which reason imperfectly apprehends, the pious heathen of all lands may put the blush of shame on the cheek of the utterly irreligious man in Christian lands. The heart craves some supernatural help; instinctively worships some supposed supernatural power. Christendom, strangely enough, presents the remarkable and sad anomaly of persons flooded with light who yet acknowledge no God, exhibit no reverence for a Higher Power, and live in total disregard of their religious natures. Cornelius, heathen though he was, did not thus do violence to his better nature.

Cornelius was a *God-fearing man*. The question whether he was a Jewish proselyte, a "proselyte of the gate," so-called, has been much discussed, with strong probabilities against the supposition. He had been brought into contact with the Jews, had learned much concerning their religion, and had come to know and reverence and fear the true God. His character was not built upon any mere materialistic philosophy that makes all virtue spring from self-interest alone, and rears its monumental works of goodness on the deceptive dogma, "Honesty is the best policy." The *fear of God* was the foundation of his character and the inspiration of his life, as it is with every true and God-accepted man.

The influence of this devout, God-fearing man *was felt throughout his household*. A man's religion that does not affect his family is a very weak, sentimental thing, not worth the having. If children have no respect for the religion of their parents, that religion must have had a very defective exemplification, or the heart of the child must be exceptionally obdurate. The religion of Cornelius made the very soldiers of his band devout. They could not but be impressed with his reverent bearing.

There was in Cornelius *a happy blending of devotion and of well-doing, of subjective piety and of objective goodness*. He "prayed," and he "gave much alms." If any one thinks that Cornelius is

the representative of merely virtuous and upright worldlings, building their hopes of heaven on external works of fair semblance, let such a one pause and ponder the inspired record of this typical man.

He "prayed"—not as the flower prays to the dew, nor as the parched earth to the freighted clouds. It was not merely the instinctive prayer of Nature, nor the sentimental prayer of the naturalist, but the intelligent cry of a personal soul to a personal God. He "prayed to God." And that not in some moment of utmost agony and stress, as does the terrified atheist whose fear overmasters his creed; but he "prayed always"—habitually his soul sent forth its petitions to God, while he religiously observed special forms and regular seasons of prayer.

If you, my friend, standing without the Church, are hopeful of your state because of the supposed companionship of Cornelius, let me ask, Do you bow with him in constant pleadings of soul before Jehovah? Is prayer to God the *habit* of your life? Herein does Cornelius rebuke the prayerless man. However such a man may boast of the correctness of his life, he can claim no fellowship with this devout and prayerful Gentile soldier.

Cornelius "gave much alms"—not to his own kindred and friends alone, the limit of many a man's benevolence, but to the despised Jews. There are many whose religion is all sentiment and no

substance, all breath and no bread. The religion of Cornelius had a body as well as a soul, and it had a body *because* it had a soul. Praying and alms-giving, united, form a mystic bond between earth and heaven; separated, neither of them reaches the throne of God, or lifts the soul to the height of fellowship with him. The prayer of faith and the gift of love, like the two wings of a bird, bear the heart's burden up to the bosom of the Infinite, and come back again like a white dove of peace, with a new blessing and a divine strength.

Alms, to be acceptable to God, must be the fruit of love, the pledge of the heart's yearning to be true and God-like—thank-offerings, aspirations of heart—all given, and done with a sense of incompleteness and unmeritoriousness. Such, I apprehend, were the alms of Cornelius. They had no merit in themselves; but, as an index of the heart's longing and aim, they were acceptable to God. But alms offered as purchase-money for the favor of men, much less the favor of God—the wealth of the world given thus would not ennoble the giver above a selfish miser, nor buy one smile of God's approval. Cornelius was neither niggardly in his charity, nor inconstant in his prayers. He “gave much” and “prayed always”—worthy example for men, both within and without the Christian Church.

So much the record says of him in plain terms;

more it indirectly reveals in the narration. He was *sincere*. There is a valuable lesson in the etymology of this much-used word. You may recall its origin from the two Latin words, *sine cera*, signifying *without wax*, and originally applied to pure honey. Applied to man, it is one of the strongest epithets of true nobility, indicating a regal nature, a heart without guile, a character without dross—the pure honey of honest desire and purpose without the wax of self-deception, prejudice, or pride. Such was Cornelius. Every step he took was an honest one in the direction of duty, as it was made known to him. Blessed is the man who stands a peer by his side in this high distinction. God loves a true, sincere man, though his head be enveloped in clouds of error and of doubt.

Cornelius was an *honest seeker after truth*. Paganism had not satisfied him; standing amid her temples and gods and splendid rites, he had asked, "Where shall I find truth?" Priests had led him into the penetralia of their sanctuaries, but truth was not there; to their shrines and altars, but he saw not the fair form which he sought; he wandered through the halls and academic groves of philosophers, but the blessed vision came not to his weary eyes. With yearning of heart he had fled to Judaism, and in its clearer vision of God he had rejoiced; but even there he had not rested, for he felt that the revelation was not full, the apprehension was not perfect. So he waited

and longed and looked for the completed vision and the more perfect knowledge of truth, as travelers on the mountains watch and wait for the rising of the sun. Probably he had heard of Christ with a yearning desire to know more of this wonderful Teacher.

With such a character and in such an attitude Cornelius was *susceptible and receptive*. There is many a man, dissatisfied with old formulas and dogmas, calling himself truth-seeker and progressionist, who yet has in his heart no open door for truth. A doubter such may be, but not a devout inquirer, with his whole nature receptive, and every avenue of his being inviting Truth to enter and abide.

There are many, like Pilate, whose intellects cry, "What is truth?" but whose souls have no eye to perceive it, and no welcome for it. Cornelius cried for it, hailed it, and was therefore led on by the blessed angel into the fair Kingdom of Truth, down to its deepest mysteries, up to its gleaming heights.

II. God is not indifferent to such a character as this; he meets and reveals himself to such a one, as the history of Cornelius clearly shows.

Cornelius was praying at three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of prayer for Israel, and fasting as well as praying, when he saw, in some different way from the usual mode of sight, an angel, who called him by name, saying, "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." The

angel bade him send to Joppa for Peter, who would tell him what he ought to do. He immediately obeyed the angelic command, and dispatched three trusty servants to Joppa, where Peter was at the time staying, to bring this honored apostle up to Cesarea, that he might learn from his lips the way to light, for which his heart was yearning.

Observe that this was God's response to the prayer of that devout, sincere thinker. Not unseen and unrewarded did he offer his prayer, or grope his way toward the light. God says, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before" me. "I know thee, and will not leave thee unenlightened and unhelped." So it is with every sincere Cornelius. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." Every-where God seeks the soul that seeks him. He will send angels and men to lead such to the truth and to the way of life.

But the angel does not preach the Gospel to Cornelius. No tongue of angel ever yet preached Christ in the ear of man since that first announcement of his advent to earth. Man preaches to his brother man—the sinner saved, to the sinner lost. To Peter shall be given the distinguished honor of gathering in this first Gentile fruit to the Christian Church. But even this illustrious apostle is not prepared for so

great a mission. It seems strange to us that he appears to have no idea of Christianity breaking down all party-walls between men, and becoming the universal religion. The whole brotherhood of the young Church shared with him this Jewish belief concerning an exclusive religion. The Gospel had come in contact with the pagan world in Samaria, and a church had also been founded in Antioch ; but, save the apostle Paul, hardly another leader in the Church at that time cherished any clear idea of Jewish Christians and Gentiles uniting and mingling on a common platform.

One of the greatest and gravest questions of the early Church was the admission of Gentiles into its fellowship. This question constantly appears in the Acts and in the Epistles. It required a miracle to uproot this prejudice from Peter and from his brethren, even so far as to open the door for Gentiles to come in.

Peter was lodging "with one Simon a tanner, whose house was by the sea-side." The same business is carried on to-day in the same place, and the traveler is directed to the very site which tradition has marked as the spot of the memorable vision. It is certainly by the "sea-side," and the waves dash against the shore at your very feet. It is not difficult for you to accept the tradition. At the hour of noon Peter went up to the flat roof of the house—so often a

place of resort in Oriental lands—to engage in prayer. He was hungry as he waited for the call to the noon meal, and fell into a trance, in which a plenteous meal was presented to his astonished view. He “saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth : wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord ; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice : and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”

This remarkable vision was to teach Peter an important lesson—that the blood of redemption had obliterated all distinctions between the holy race and the Gentiles, a distinction which had heretofore been symbolized by clean and unclean beasts ; that there was a perfect equality between all men—as men—before God ; that God was the Creator and Friend of all—the *universal Father*—and that Christ was the Saviour and Brother of all. Slow to learn this great lesson, his Jewish lips cry out in response to the command “Kill, and eat,” “Not so, Lord ; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.”

Prejudice is an evil spirit not easily cast out of the human mind. Hardly yet is the entire Church free from its pernicious influence. Even now you will not seldom hear the cry, "Not so, Lord," from the pious lips of the astonished and scandalized disciples. Can a Christian fellowship believers, of all names, subscribing to various specific formulas, who yet sincerely accept Christ as Teacher and Master?

"Not so, Lord," lustily shouts many a modern Peter. Are there not high ecclesiastical walls surrounding sections of the Church to-day, outside of which there is believed to be no true discipleship and no salvation. Yes, there is unquestionably bigotry in the Church of to-day. But in his own way the radical, the skeptic, the free-religionist, and the agnostic is alike the bigoted slave of prejudice.

Let us heed this divine rebuke of all unscriptural distinctions in Christ's kingdom. Is it not time that we should have done with this unseemly spirit of caste in the Church which Christ purchased with his own blood, and founded for the publishing and exemplification of his pure and purifying truth? Is it quite certain that the Master approves of the distinctions which still obtain in the Christian Church? What is the basis of these distinctions? Wealth, social position, color, and nameless other foolish dividing lines. Are these recognized in that commonwealth, founded by Christ, in which we are all

equally "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith?" Does the "color-line," which, north and south, divides the worshipers of the same Lord and "brethren beloved" in the same "household of faith," find recognition in *our* sacred *Magna Charta*?

And if a true Christian expediency has hitherto been a sufficient justification of these distinctions, are we not far enough on in the Christian ages to allow Christian *principle* to assert its authority and to lift the whole Church, over all this redeemed earth, up to its pure and inspiring heights? Shall we not, then, speedily batter down all walls of pride and class and bigoted exclusiveness, which Christ himself has not erected? Shall not the entire Church learn anew this great lesson taught to Peter, and henceforth "What God hath cleansed"—by the blood of redemption and by the sanctification of the Spirit—that, let no one of Christ's disciples call "common or unclean?"

While Peter hesitated, the messengers from Cornelius arrived; Peter received them cordially, responded to the call, and returned with them to Cesarea. Cornelius narrated his vision to the apostle, who, after the recital, yielded to the heavenly teaching, declaring to all present, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh

righteousness, is accepted with him." Then he zealously preached Jesus to Cornelius and to his friends; the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. They were immediately baptized and received into fellowship with the infant Church.

III. How much does all this teach concerning the sufficiency of moral excellence for the individual character, or the sufficiency of natural religion for the race?

Let us be candid. God does set a value upon moral excellence. Good works springing from right motives *are* good in his sight. Prayer and alms from every honest Cornelius go up to God "as a memorial."

The attitude which orthodoxy has sometimes assumed toward moral men outside the Church, has undoubtedly been unwise, if not unjust. Nothing is gained, but much is lost, when Christian teachers speak in unguarded terms too disparagingly of moral virtues and of good deeds. Whether there be or be not a hereafter, it is far better to be moral than immoral, to be chaste than licentious, to be honest and honorable than to be false and base.

And more: true moral excellence in a sincere character is an important and hopeful foundation upon which to build the Christian and heaven-enduring structure. Integrity, truthfulness, conscientiousness, incorruptibility, fidelity to obligations, are

valuable foundation-stones for a worthy Christian character. It ought never to be said or intimated in a Christian pulpit that a man is no better with these qualities than without them. He *is* better, beyond question, in God's sight, and, if he do not *trust* in these, he is on a safer road to heaven than the vicious and profligate. He will be more likely to have an open ear for "the truth as it is in Jesus."

It is not a matter of surprise that thoughtful men of this class are sometimes alienated from the Church if they find themselves indiscriminately classed with criminals and vagabonds without a word of qualification or explanation. And this may possibly have sometimes happened when the religious teacher was hardly aware of the implication which his words contained, while he was vigorously emphasizing the deeper necessities of man.

Let us, then, put a right estimate on moral character and good works. The misguided religionist says, "Good for nothing;" the moralist says, "Good for every thing;" God says, "Good according to the spirit that prompts them."

It is important that this whole question of the relations between morality and religion, and character, should be better understood. The imputation of teaching a religion that does not fully recognize the value of morality, and positively aid in its development, is a libel upon Christianity. It is the glory of

the Christian religion that it alone, among all the religions of mankind, contains an absolutely perfect system of morals, inseparably connected with the warp and woof of its facts and doctrines and duties. And it is an historic fact which cannot be gainsaid, that wherever Christianity has been intelligently and faithfully presented the highest type of character and the purest morals have been its unfailing fruits.

And yet it is quite possible that the moral element in Christianity is sometimes less emphasized than the spiritual—its teachings concerning obligations to man less clearly recognized and less sharply put than are its enjoined obligations to God. But the religion of Christ is not chargeable with such confusion of ideas, or failure in application of Christian ethics. It is not only a *Gospel of Grace*, but a *Gospel of Character*; and so do its true teachers and disciples present it to man. It does recognize all that is good in man; but in seeking his highest development it bids him beware of trusting his own deceitful heart, and of seeking to build his character on the sandy foundation of self-righteousness. But the Bible everywhere shows a generous appreciation of honesty, and of all the virtues that are sometimes classed under the term “natural goodness.” It goes so far as to warrant us in acknowledging that no thoroughly sincere man, possessing moral earnestness, and conscientiously following the light he has, will ever miss heaven.

The Divine Father will never deny his paternal nature by casting off, like an unnatural parent, such an honest, faithful right-doer. "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

But conceding all this, in the spirit of Christian candor, what is there in this narrative to prove—what is sometimes assumed—that simple morality is all that a man needs to fit him for heaven, and that the religion of nature is all-sufficient. Where does this interesting history imply that the moralist does not need Christianity, and that the Gospel is a superfluity? Do we find any real similarity between Cornelius, and the moralist, or the naturalist, or the deist, of Christian lands?

He was no mere moralist; he placed no *dependence* on good works. He was a devout worshiper of God, eminently religious, regarding with high conscientiousness not only all his obligations to his fellow-men, but the higher obligations which bound him to his Maker. He was, moreover, listening to catch the voice of God, ready to take any advanced step to which the divine light might lead him. He received the Gospel, was baptized, and united with the Church under the influence of the first Gospel sermon that he ever heard.

Where is the man standing aloof from Christianity and the Church, however virtuous and noble his

character, who can take his place beside Cornelius? He gave his whole being to Christ, and his name and fortune to the infant Church, when its doctrines were derided by the multitude, and its simple band of adherents were feeble and despised, though in this act his position and fortune were imperiled. You, my friend, withhold from Christ, heart and name and service, though his truth has been substantiated by the cumulative evidence of the Christian centuries, and his Church has been crowned with the glorious victories of over eighteen hundred years of unparalleled history. Cornelius saw and rejoiced in the light of this Sun of Hope when first He rose above the horizon; you see Him ascending in full-orbed splendor to the very zenith—flashing his glories over all the earth—and, with his burning beams dazzling your very eyes, wonder if it is not the twinkling of some faint star.

O, friends, let us follow Cornelius to the full embrace of Christ before we claim brotherhood with him!

But more: this entire history teaches us that even this man's singularly pure character was not in its natural state sufficient, and could only find completeness in Christ. Devout, benevolent, sincere, and thoroughly imbued with moral honesty and moral earnestness, he yet needed the added grace and strength which Christ alone can give. Were his condition and character all that could be desired,

were he the model man for the ages, why did not God leave him as he was? The vision, the angel message, all the carefully detailed working of divine and human agencies, prove how important it was in God's view that Cornelius should have the further light of the Gospel. God's eye was upon him, and his Spirit had followed him through the years of honest search for truth. This fear of God, these many and great excellences of character, were not the product of nature alone, but of gracious influence and of divine help already afforded. The spiritual *appetite* as well as the spiritual pabulum was from God. And now God will not leave him until he brings him face to face with the "truth as it is in Jesus." This is what God seeks to do for every sincere soul. The blessing of sincerity is not so much that it saves in itself as that it leads to Christ, the only Saviour of men.

This, then, is the prime thought that underlies this entire subject. There is no completeness of character, of happiness, or of life, apart from Jesus Christ. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him"—and only in him—"which is the head of all principality and power." He is the end of all seeking, of all doing, of all living. Glorious end! Shall you or I stop short of it?

Grant that you are thoroughly moral; is it not

better to be Christly too? Grant that the foundation of your character is laid in high moral excellence; shall not the building go up in strength and beauty? And what if Christ's hands shall help to lay the costly stones, and the Spirit's fingers shall give the structure touches of beauty which no human power can equal? Can you forbid? Would you not rather be "God's building," and stand the fires of judgment and the ordeal of the world to come—enduring and glorious—than to be the fragile structure of human build, only to crumble and fall at the first shock of the coming day?

What if in winter you say, "The air is crisp and bracing, the hearth-fire is cheerful; I want no better climate than this?" Will you shut yourself in from nature when spring comes with warm breath and warbling birds and blossoming trees and emerald fields, and summer with affluent flowers, and autumn with glowing days and golden fruits? Is it nothing, because winter *is* good, that God shall give you these crowning glories of the circling year? You, my friend out of Christ, are in the winter of life; and when God in the Gospel of his Son brings you the blessed sunshine of spring and summer to thaw the icy heart, and make the flowers of Eden to bloom again there, and the fruits of Paradise to hang in purple clusters, can you prefer the chilling, barren winter still?

Nay, rather let us each say, Come, O blessed light
and fragrant breath of Gospel spring-time! Come,
O sunny day of summer hope in Christ! Come,
O refreshing breezes from the heavenly hills, O
clustered fruit of Calvary's vintage! Come, O rich
autumnal fullness of life and joy in Christ!

“Dark the night, the snow is falling ;
Through the storm are voices calling,
Guides mistaken and misleading,
Far from home, and help receding :
Vain is all those voices say !
Show me Thy way !

“Blind am I, as those who guide me ;
Let me feel thee close beside me!
Come as light into my being!
Unto me be eyes, All-seeing!
Hear my heart's one wish, I pray!
Show me Thy way!

“Thou must lead me, and none other,
Truest Lover, Friend, and Brother;
Thou art my soul's shelter, whether
Stars gleam out, or tempests gather.
In Thy presence night is day:
Show me Thy way!”

TIMOTHY
THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

—PAUL

"Feelings come and go like light troops following the victory of the present; but principles, like troops of the line, are undisturbed, and stand fast."—RICHTER.

“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck.”—1 TIMOTHY i, 19.

THE quiet lakes and hills of the Scottish highlands have a beauty all their own, which charms the beholder, even though he may have witnessed the glories of Alpine heights and the dazzling splendors of the Orient. So, in the study of human character, there is many a valuable lesson to be learned from those around whose head no aureola circles, and over whose lives no mystic glamour hangs.

To-day we give our thought to the study of one of the more quiet, yet one of the most beautiful and faultless, characters presented in the Sacred Record. A character not majestically great, as Paul, the peerless leader of the early Christian Church, or Moses, the heroic commander and astute statesman, or Daniel, the immaculate prime-minister, but great in a combination of those qualities which, if less brilliant, are not less essential to manly strength and genuine success in life.

Besides, this modest young man Timothy is brought

all the nearer to us, and the lessons of his life are all the more valuable for us, because he stands before us lifted to no heights of circumstantial greatness, but treads the common paths of humble, faithful service which we are called to pursue. He is one of those youths, too seldom found, who exalt the lowliest walks of life and shine conspicuously by their fidelity in every sphere of duty.

Timothy's early youth, so far as outward circumstances affected it, was not spent under favorable surroundings. The small provincial city of Lystra, at the base of the Black Mountains, in the district of Lycaonia in Asia Minor, was probably his home. The population was rude and superstitious, accepting fully the old heathen mythology, and demoralized by its corrupting influences. Had the character of Timothy been formed amid such influences as these only, the world might never have heard his name.

But amid that thick darkness of heathendom shone one clear light, and that light was in the home of Timothy. There the fires of a pure devotion burned ever on the household altar. Timothy's mother was a devout Jewess, and trained her boy in the Jewish faith. His father was a Gentile of Hellenic extraction, but whether he died while Timothy was but a child, or lived on with nothing worthy of mention to mark his influence, certain it is that the mother's hand molded the son, and the mother's faith, as is

usually the case, wrapped him in its pure, protecting folds.

Into this wild region, with its uncultured pagan inhabitants, came Paul and Barnabas preaching the new Gospel of Christianity, on their first missionary tour. On this visit we are introduced to a scene illustrating the contact of the Gospel with heathen superstitions. As Paul preached to the crowds gathered about him he wrought a miracle of healing on a cripple, lame from birth. The astonished Lystrians, seeing the lame man leaping for very joy, believed the gods of their mythology had really come among them. Jupiter was their tutelary deity ; without the city's gate stood his temple. The commanding figure of Barnabas was at once taken to be that of Jupiter himself, while the eloquent words of Paul, more slight and less commanding in form, marked him as Mercury, the god of eloquence, and Jupiter's customary attendant. The whole city was in a whirl of excitement. The priest, leading on the excited throng, with bulls and garlands for the sacrificial ceremony, hastened to pay the humble apostles divine honors.

The scene is instructive, as furnishing one of those undesigned corroborations of the Scripture history which to the impartial mind verify its truthfulness. The reader of Ovid's "*Metamorphoses*" will recall the story of Baucis and Philemon, and remember,

with added interest, that the Roman poet represents Jupiter and Mercury as visiting, in human form, these very regions, and he will see, in both evangelist and poet, the true representation of society, with new evidence that the Inspired Record is worthy of all credence.

But no sooner does Paul repel their proffered honors, with earnest words of Christian reproof and entreaty, than there follows a sudden revulsion of feeling, and the unlettered crowd which had just hailed them as gods now pelt the apostles with stones. Paul, the chief speaker, is dragged, bruised and bleeding, without the gate, and left for dead. A few disciples the words of truth had made, and these stood around the apparently lifeless body of the apostle, when, as if by another miracle of resurrection, he arose and went with them into the city.

Among that little disciple band, listening with eager interest to every word of the apostles, and witnessing all these strange scenes, we may imagine a young man of slender figure, some sixteen years of age, with delicately chiseled features and serious face, wearing ever a thoughtful expression. That interesting youth was Timothy, the subject of our present study. Into his receptive heart the good seed of truth dropped; the dews of heavenly grace fell on it, the divine Spirit fructified it, and faithful care cultured it, until the whole Christian world has

breathed the perfume of its flower and feasted on its rich fruitage.

The missionary apostles departed ; the young and newly-made disciple remained, at least the one abiding and abundant reward of their labor, with all its attendant trials of stones and scars, of insult and of injury.

It was not, to the outward look, a hopeful prospect for this young convert to Christianity. Not a synagogue was in the city ; there was no large and enthusiastic Church to stimulate and encourage the new believer ; there were few, if any, congenial and helpful associates. What wonder had it been if the young man had never been heard of again among the ranks of Christian believers ? But he *was* heard of, and when, a year or two later, Paul revisited the scene of his labors and persecutions, to strengthen the converts, he found this young disciple a strong and vigorous Christian, and his associates in the little company of believers loud in praise of his excellences.

Every young man, in village or city, in church or school, is making his record of character, and is better known, for good or for evil, than he thinks. Character is self-announcing, and conduct, be it of faithlessness or of fidelity, reports itself without the aid of stenographer or press.

The discerning eye of Paul quickly perceived the

superior qualities of Timothy, and he urged him to put himself under his tuition and become his traveling companion. For such a youth, under such circumstances, to attract the attention, secure the confidence, and keep, until death separated them, the friendship of the most illustrious man that all the ages have produced, argues the possession of the rarest qualities, and marks Timothy as one of earth's truest noblemen.

It is not our purpose to linger long on the outward history of Timothy, intensely interesting as that history is, with all its vicissitudes of travel and adventure, by sea and by land, in companionship with his distinguished teacher and master, the incomparable Paul. Enough there was in such a life to test the character of any man, and if he had not possessed the material of which heroes and martyrs are made, the historic record would have broken off long before the crown of martyrdom was put upon the head of either the apostle or his attendant.

But, as it was, these two hearts and two lives were thenceforth knit together by indissoluble bonds; and the faithful servant shared the toil and the glory of the chief of the apostles till his final martyrdom.

We can only allude to that parting scene when the youth of eighteen summers, with manly purpose stamped upon his brow and tears coursing down his fair cheeks, kissed his mother a fond adieu, and,

with her benedictions on his head, went forth to his untried and strange life-work.

Rough paths are to be trodden ; hardships to be endured ; trials and buffetings to be his daily experience. He is soon at Philippi with Paul and Silas, but his youthful appearance, it may be, spares him their prison fate. At Thessalonica he takes his share of the rough treatment which the enraged mob metes out to this evangelistic trio. At Berea he joins gladly in the work of instructing the willing and studious listeners. At Athens, probably, he joins, for a little time, his master, anxiously waiting his coming after a short separation, and views with wonder the babbling crowd, the disputative philosophers, and the shrines of multiplied divinities. Climbing the Hill of Mars and the steep Acropolis, he beholds with admiration the peerless Parthenon and the imposing statue of Minerva, sharing, meanwhile, the apostle's deep solicitude when he sees this center of art and of learning wholly given to idolatry.

He is soon with Paul at Corinth—the gay, spectacular, and corrupt seat of luxury and dissipation—beholding sights which shock the Christian sense and grieve the virtuous heart—the conspicuous temple of Venus, with its sensuous worship, on the Acrocorinthus, and many another scene which a youth less strong and stable than was he could only have beheld with peril of character. His feet soon tread

the sacred soil of Jerusalem, and later he is winning friends among plebeians and nobles in classic Rome, as the salutations in the letters of Paul, written from the city of the seven hills, clearly show.

Sometimes he is with Paul, sometimes he is alone, commissioned by the apostle to fulfill some delicate and difficult mission in the Churches which the missionary apostle had established. Every-where he exhibits the same distinguishing traits, the same trustworthy character, and at thirty years of age, or younger, he is ordained bishop of Ephesus, the proud and splendid city of the East—a post of vast responsibility, where Christianity and idolatry came into strong conflict, and great wisdom was required to superintend the struggling Church.

Looking now at that young man, rising out of such surroundings to such a summit of honorable distinction, we ask, *What was there in his character that made him what he became?* What distinguished him from hundreds of other youths, apparently true converts of the Christian faith, beginning their Christian career under circumstances far more auspicious, giving larger promise of splendid years of faithful service, yet, alas! making only a sad record of utter failure, of inconstancy marked by periodic spasms of deceptive promise, or of an indifferent mediocrity in religious attainment, scarcely distinguishable from the avowed worldling.

The question is important at any time, for the momentous interests of the Christian Church and of the world are intimately connected with it; but it is especially fraught with interest and importance now, when so many young people have assumed the vows of discipleship and have taken their places in the Christian ranks.* One cannot but tremble while he rejoices at the evident trophies of grace, as he remembers the mournful wrecks of Christian faith that lie stranded all along the shores of human experience. We cannot but unitedly and earnestly implore the Spirit to illumine our minds and carry conviction to our hearts, with divine force, while we seek with honest purpose to learn the lessons which the study of so strong and beautiful a character as that of Timothy teaches us.

Timothy stands before us as the representative of *character* rather than of *sentiment* in religion.

The religion of sentiment is a far more common article, I fear, even in Churchly circles, than the religion of character. The one is cheaply obtained, the other costs the price of earnest endeavor; the one is a natural growth from a corrupt, though religiously awakened, nature, the other is a spiritual product, secured by human co-operation with the divine agency; the one touches the emotional nature only, the other reaches down to the secret springs of being; the one

* This lecture was originally delivered after an extensive revival.

has respect to dogmas, the other to principles; the one regards ceremonies, the other looks to the life; the one is fleeting as a morning cloud, the other endures through all vicissitudes; the one is a dew-drop sparkling in the sun to vanish the next hour, the other is a diamond flashing forth its brilliance in darkest night as in brightest day; the one is false, the other true; the one is born of earth, the other is born of God, allied to the skies, and aspiring ever to its heavenly birthplace.

Nothing is more common than to mistake the religion of sentiment for the religion of character. You catch the one by infection—by the sympathy which flows from crowds, through natures religiously aroused; you secure the other only by bringing the individual soul into the presence-chamber of its God, there, alone with him, to settle the solemn question of duty and destiny, and thenceforth to maintain constant and conscious personal communion with the unseen but living Jehovah.

You can readily see how easy it is to *mistake* a religious sentiment, a good desire, a momentary resolution, a flow of sympathetic feeling, a gush of tender and joyful emotion, for genuine religion; and yet such an experience does not radically touch the character, does not regenerate the nature, does not reconstruct the life-plan, does not reform settled habits, does not materially change the life.

The Scriptures are full of delineations of such fruitless experiences, and fraught with solemn warnings against them. Trees with withering leaf and fruitless branches, seeds that yield no harvest, blossoms fading and falling into nothingness, clouds without rain, the morning dew so quickly exhaled, the shallow soil underlaid with rock, promising much, but producing nothing except the stalk—these and countless others are the sad but truthful images which revelation faithfully employs to guard us against religious deception and failure.

Would we might all heed the warning voice and learn the lessons of divine wisdom! But the Church goes on, too often with a zeal untempered by knowledge, multiplying her professed converts, not too numerously, but with all *too little subsequent care and patient culture* to build up stalwart Christian character, and utilize for Christ and for his Church the material she has labored so zealously to get in hand.

Let it, then, be understood, and ever kept in mind, that no religion is of any worth that does not lay its mighty hand of transforming power on *the character* and mold it into conformity to God's will and word. Such was the power of that "unfeigned faith" which quickened the heart and shaped the life of Timothy, the young Lystrian convert. It was a faith that crystallized into character—pure,

strong, enduring, Christly character, worthy of all study and imitation. Let us observe some of its more prominent features.

The character of Timothy was grounded on Scripture knowledge, developed under an enlightened conscience, guarded by constant vigilance, perfected by assiduous culture.

Its underlying basis was a *knowledge of God's word*. One stroke of the apostle's pen, when writing from his Roman prison to Timothy, reveals a secret worth more to any youth than mines of gold : "*From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It was that knowledge of God's truth and God's ways of dealing with men, revealed in the Old Testament, which he had so carefully studied, that gave him the attentive ear, the thoughtful mind, the receptive heart, as he listened with that rude crowd to the words of Paul and Barnabas. It was that knowledge which prepared the heart for the seed of truth and caused that seed to remain, yielding its bountiful fruitage of purified character, while the "fowls of the air" snatched the seed from other hearts.

There is a sound philosophy in the statement that a knowledge of God's word and will must form the basis and inspiration of every truly religious character. An intelligent idea underlies and inspires every

intelligent purpose; and that idea has respect to the object toward which the purpose is directed. A right religious decision, having respect to the soul's relations to God and its individual responsibility, can only rest on some intelligent conception of God, some clear knowledge of duty, some conviction of God's requirements.

And such religious conviction and purpose, with their resultants of character and conduct, will depend largely on the fullness of the mind's knowledge and the clearness of its idea of God—his truth, his law, his love, his all-helpful power. So true is it that "The entrance of" his "word giveth light," and that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

And thus it is that one fruitful cause of failure in a religious life is ignorance of God's word and indisposition to study its inspired truth. The most hopeful sign of modern times is the apparently increasing interest in the study of the Bible and the facilities to aid in a thorough understanding of its marvelous treasures of wisdom, more priceless than the wealth of worlds besides. But this hopeful sign has its accompanying peril, and awakens in the thoughtful mind just apprehensions. The danger of our age is that the

Sabbath-school or the Church, or some *organization*, called by whatever name, will be accepted as a substitute for *parental instruction and individual study*; that the parent will commit to some other hand the sacred charge of the child's religious training, and the individual disciple will trust to his Sabbath Bible-lesson for a knowledge of the Scriptures, which only patient, daily, enthusiastic study can give.

That mother, Eunice, daily and faithfully giving her child Timothy lessons of divine wisdom out of the Book of God, is a picture and pattern which every mother and every father of our day should ponder and imitate; and the fruit of that loving labor, as seen in Timothy's after-life, should encourage every parent to like fidelity in pre-occupying the virgin soil of childhood mind with the vital seeds of God's all-fructifying truth.

And if any young man would stand beside Timothy in Christian attainment, let him seek to imitate him in Christian knowledge. Let none of us, young friends, delude ourselves with the vain hope that our religion is any thing more than a mere sentiment if it be not the product of a living communion with God, through the habitual, diligent study and practice of his revealed word.

But the truth of God is not simply a thing to be *learned*; it is rather to be *lived*; not knowledge to be stored in the memory, but to be "hid in" the

"heart;" not truth to be assented to as a dogma, but truth to be incorporated into the character, translated in the life. It is a fearful thing to "hold the truth in unrighteousness," to refuse to yield to its rightful sway, to know what we do not practice, to profess belief in solemn verities which have no practical, appreciable influence over our lives.

And this leads me to observe that in the character of Timothy, as in that of Paul and every other worthy man of Bible history or of modern times, *conscience* was the supreme governing power of his entire nature.

Here, again, we touch a vital distinction between the religion of sentiment and the religion of character. The one seems only to dally with the affections and toy with the emotions, while the conscience, true monarch of the man and master of his powers, slumbers on in undisturbed indifference, or, if awakened, weakly and vainly struggles to gain the ascendancy which passion and appetite and habit still maintain. But true religion makes conscience regnant, puts the whole being under its subjection, and thus reconstructs character after the new and divine order, with the lower, animal nature subservient, and the higher and heaven-born nature dominant.

By this sign may we know how to distinguish between the false and the true in religion. True religion has to do primarily and chiefly with the conscience,

reaching and transforming the entire nature through its enthronement; false and sentimental religion leaves the conscience undeveloped and powerless. Do we ask what is the process?

First, true religion *enlightens the conscience*, pouring its rays of divine illumination in upon this divine faculty, giving the man clear apprehensions of duty, removing the film from his blinded eyes, lifting him up above the murky atmosphere of ignorance and superstition and animalism, and giving him visions of God, duty, possibility, destiny, that ravish the soul, and place him in a new world. Thus, true religion gives a *pure* conscience, enlightened, instructed, and in harmony with God's truth. Such was the conscience of Timothy.

But this is not all: *genuine religion awakens and stimulates conscience to perform its true functions* as rightful ruler of the soul's powers, and asserts its authority. An awakened and sensitive conscience, quick to detect wrong, shrinking from the approach of sin, as the sensitive plant shrinks from the touch of the hand, is the legitimate and certain consequent of genuine conversion.

Nor is this the total result. True religion always and absolutely *enthrones conscience*; puts the crown of royalty on its head, the scepter of empire in its hand, proclaims its rightful authority and accepts its mandate as law. And it is thus that the superlative

value of religion is manifest. It is not so much that it gives its possessor a joyous experience on earth, or a blissful heaven beyond ; but it is that it brings his whole being into harmony with God, and makes his entire life an exalted, glorified existence, a sublime moral victory.

When, then, you see one apparently begin the Christian life by an avowed acceptance of Christ, and by promised allegiance to him, who yet permits the old habits of self-indulgence, or indolence, or negligence of Christian duty, to hold him in their grasp, how can you but breathe a sigh as you remember that there is one more victim of deception, one more stumbling-block in the true path of life. Nay, more than that : when you see one thus starting forth in a professedly new life, whose heart does not kindle with new aspirations and burn with high resolve to be and to do all that is best and noblest, you cannot but be convinced that he has missed the true conception of the Christian life and has mistaken some sentimental feeling for genuine religion. For when the eye of the soul is really opened to perceive Truth in her beauty and royalty, and when her solemn voice is heard calling on to her illuminated paths and up her glowing heights, there is no vision and no voice besides that can charm the willing captive away from her fascinating supremacy.

Young friends, there is a kind of religion, falsely

so-called, too current in society, which is not only false, but *so* false as to be positively and immeasurably harmful, because it is a serious hinderance to true Christian growth and development of character. A religion that does not enthrone conscience, that does not *start* its subject on the way to all loftiness and nobleness of being, and urge him to self-conquest and to worthy achievement, is not the heaven-born fire and faith which stirred the heart of Timothy and lifted him to such a summit of pre-eminence.

Conscience must be king. Themistocles proposed to the Athenians to burn the fleets of the allies that were in the port of Athens, and thus secure to themselves greater glory. "The project is useful," said Aristides, "but it is unjust." That simple speech saved the Athenians from attempting to secure an advantage by an act of injustice. This act and others of similar character gave to Aristides his title of "Aristides the Just."

True religion, again I say, puts this rightful ruler, Conscience, on the throne, and yields to his ennobling sway. Nothing can be admitted into the life that is not absolutely just and right.

And thus it will appear that religion is supreme or it is virtually powerless; it is every thing or it is nothing; it rules or it misleads; it transforms the character or it is a sickly sentiment.

Thus Timothy, grounded in the truth, with God's word his unerring guide, with conscience enthroned,

and his whole life brought under the sovereignty of Duty, grew to pre-eminence in Christian character; grew in favor with all who knew him; grew in efficiency in the Master's work; grew in all strong and worthy qualities; became strengthened in habits of self-denial and resistance to evil.

Timothy did not *drift*, on the current of his own nature, into this exalted excellence. Direct and earnest endeavor to excel in goodness became the one absorbing end, the one all-governing law, of his life. Vainly does many a young disciple imagine that moral excellence, unlike any other good of life, will come to him without diligent seeking. As well hope to be a scholar without study, an athlete without physical training, a successful merchant without a knowledge of figures or letters, as to be a true Christian by idle drifting. No, young friends, it is not thus the heights of Christian excellence are reached.

Let Dante teach us that,

“Not on flowery beds, or under shade
Of canopy, reposing, heaven is won.”

Let another poet ring in our ears these inspiring words of wisdom :

“No man e'er gained a happy life by chance,
Or yawned it into being with a wish.”

We must imbibe the spirit of Timothy, who endured “hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,”

and of Timothy's yet more illustrious teacher, accepting his motto as our own, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I *press toward the mark* for the prize," if we would seize that prize of genuine Christian character and exalted Christian attainment.

There was also a beautiful *symmetry* in the character of Timothy. With such a groundwork of early Christian nurture, with such a dominating purpose, with such a faithful teacher and monitor as Paul, with such a teachable and obedient spirit as Timothy possessed, with such readiness to be and to suffer, to do and to dare, what else should we look for but a character so faultless, a life so true and steadfast.

There was a never-swerving fidelity to principle; there was a never-resting and never-wearying activity in well-doing; there was a constant stirring "up of the gift" that was in him; there was tenderness that manifested itself in "tears," not seldom flowing, which Paul so well remembered in his prison; there was courage which dared to face any foe that needed to be faced, and to "fight the good fight of faith;" there was a singular unselfishness which won for him commendation above Barnabas or Luke or Titus, or any of the other companions of St. Paul, who writes encouragingly to the Philippians that he hopes soon to send Timotheus to them, and affectionately adds, "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care

for your state." There was a trustworthiness in this young disciple that led the sagacious apostle to commit to him the most important duties and responsible trusts, such as the adjustment of difficulties and the settlement of grave and important questions relating to the government of the early churches.

But time fails me, and I cannot further prolong the study of the character of this most estimable and exemplary young man. I would, my friends, that each of you might partake of his spirit and emulate his virtues; that you might be as well grounded in the truth of the Inspired Volume; might study it with equal diligence, and practice it with equal application; might "stir up the gift that is in you," as did he; might begin your Christian life with as high a purpose, and prosecute it with as undeviating fidelity; might "study to show yourselves approved unto God," workmen that need "not to be ashamed," as he did; might "flee youthful lusts," separate yourselves from all the corrupting and enfeebling influences of the world and the flesh, and become "vessels unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use."

Need I remind you of what inestimable value it was to Timothy that his religious life, his life of conscientious devotion to truth and duty, *reached back to his earliest days?* There were no long, black, guilty years of sin and willful disregard of God's

commands ; no "sowing the wild oats" of dissipating folly to reap forever their abundant and bitter fruits ; no habits of wrong-doing so strongly entrenched in the nature as to hold defiantly their citadel in spite of pious resolves and feeble attempts to break their fearful tyranny. No ; all this was saved by that life of *continuous goodness*, beginning at the mother's side and flowing on, uninterruptedly, like the music of heaven, to the martyr's grave and translation to the skies.

Ah, my young brethren, it were far better that the Paradise of early innocence *should never be lost* than that it should be lost and regained, even if it were always possible that it might *be* regained, or certain that such *would* be the end. Do not for a moment believe that squandered years, and wasted energies, and indurated hearts, and violated consciences, and alienated affections, and world-loving natures, and deep-rooted habits of evil, and impure imaginations, are things that can be swept away by a sigh of remorse or a tear of sorrow or a look toward heaven, and become as though they had not been. No, no !

"The white stone, unfractured, ranks as most precious,
The blue lotus, unblemished, has the sweetest perfume."

Let these words of the apostle, written for the eye of young Timothy, and ever heeded by this rare

youth, be also *your* solemn and salutary admonition :
“ *Keep thyself pure.*”

Timothy achieved life's greatest victory—*self-conquest*. The body was servant, the soul was sovereign ; the mind was master, the passions were held in complete subjection. No man is great without this highest greatness of victory over the animal nature.

So self-denying was this youth, so abstinent, that even in that sunnier clime and in those earlier days when the fruit of the vine was a very common beverage, Timothy, though in delicate health and often exposed to great hardships, would not touch a drop of wine, even medicinally, without being urged by his inspired father in the Gospel to treat himself with less rigor and use slightly, and as a medicine, that which might be advantageous to his enfeebled health.

Would that all our young men would cultivate a like abstemiousness, and keep themselves under a like rigorous regimen. Call it asceticism, or Puritanism, or whatever opprobrious term you please ; it manifests a moral earnestness, a strong purpose, an exacting self-discipline, which is the very stuff of which manhood is made. And where there is one who errs in the direction of over-rigidity, there are ten thousand and more whose boasted liberty sends them reeling over the precipices of ruin, or keeps them in the overcrowded ranks of self-indulgent mediocrity.

It is Shakespeare, greatest of dramatists, who says :

“ Give me that man
That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of heart.”

Shall we rise with Timothy to this summit of power, with the crown of self-conquest on our brow, and the great poet’s laudation sounding inspiringly in our ears ?

Do you ask what came of such a life as this of the true and trusty Timothy ? What were its results on earth, its rewards here, and beyond ? Ah, who can measure or recite them ? To be associated with the greatest of earth’s great men in the founding and up-building of the early Church of Christ ; to share in the toils and trials, in the confidence and love, of one so pre-eminent as the apostle Paul ; to have his name handed down through all future time, honorably coupled with the master-spirit of the ages ; to have lived a life so pure and true that myriads of youths in the succeeding generations of men shall study it as an example and rise to life’s sublimities while they study and imitate—this surely is a fruitage of life which Gabriel might covet, and the King of Heaven himself counted as highest good.

Let us cherish the memory of this devout and noble youth. I can never forget one sunny afternoon in May, when passing out the Ostian gate in

Rome, and visiting the Church of Tre Fontane, the traditional site of St. Paul's martyrdom, and returning with saddened heart and pensive mind, burdened with the memories awakened by so many tender and precious associations, I entered the great basilica of St. Paul's, erected over the spot where his body is supposed, not without reasonable grounds, to rest. I wandered thoughtfully among its lofty Corinthian columns of polished granite. I gazed, half-bewildered, upon its gorgeous baldacchino supported on four pillars of red alabaster, with their gilded capitals and Gothic canopy, and stood as one in a delicious delirium, half-dreaming, half-waking, before the tomb of that great man of God, St. Paul.

A hallowed feeling took possession of the heart at the thought that I was presumably in the very presence of such sacred dust. "Ah, to have seen him as he was in those days of his earthly struggle, to have shared in his labors and friendship," I said, "what a privilege to mortal! To see him hereafter and strike hands with him, as I hope to do, brightens the prospect of heaven and kindles desire to be there." And then, turning, my eye rested on another shrine, close by the tomb of St. Paul, less pretentious, but full of tender interest, bearing only this one word, which suggests a whole history in itself—"*Timothei*."

Here, then, most fittingly, tradition places, side by side, the remains of these two distinguished men, the

apostle Paul and his own loved son in the Gospel, the faithful Timothy. United in life, knit together by most tender and sacred ties, well may they sleep together in death, rise together in the resurrection, shine together through the unending years of heaven.

O, illustrious heroes, standing now with that countless throng of valiant victors who have nobly "fought the fight" and bravely "kept the faith!" May we be counted worthy to take our places by their sides!

"They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Mid peril, toil, and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!"

PAUL
THE HERO.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."—PAUL

**"The man I speak of cannot in the world
Be singly counterpoised."—SHAKESPEARE**

**"His life's a hymn
The seraphim
Might hark to hear or help to sing;
And to his soul
The boundless whole
Its bounty all doth daily bring."—WASSON.**

"I have fought a good fight."—2 TIMOTHY iv, 7.

AMONG the myriad stars that the dome of the heavens presents to our gaze, astronomers recognize not more than twenty as of the first magnitude; among the millions of men who in the long ages of time have peopled this earth, a still smaller number have earned the high distinction of a place beside its most illustrious heroes. In this bright constellation of the world's transcendently great men shines, with unsurpassed, if not indeed unequaled, luster, the apostle Paul.

Judged by the qualities of his character and the results of his life, no man, save the Son of God, ever trod this earth who was his superior—possibly none who was his peer. Drop out of human history the record of any other life, and the civilized world would hardly feel such an oppressive sense of impoverishment. It is not rich enough to bear the loss of this regal man.

How shall we study such a character? How

compress into the contemplation of one brief hour a figure whose colossal form has filled the world? The very massiveness of such a character oppresses us, and makes us shrink from the hopeless task of worthily delineating it. As well might a child attempt to grasp Olympus in its hand.

But impossible as the task appears we must not be deterred from essaying it; we cannot afford to lose the priceless lessons which the life of such a man teaches us. Rich indeed are we, beyond all estimate, in having, each for his personal heritage, the record of a life so sublimely great, so singularly simple, that, though an angel might not measure its greatness, a child may admire its beauty and feel its inspiration.

Truest exemplar of Christianity, greatest of earth's benefactors, noblest of its heroes! May our hearts kindle with like ardor, and flame with like devotion to God, and burn with like enthusiasm for humanity, while we seek to learn the secret of such sovereign power!

See this man, the marvel of the ages! Between that boy, with frank face and thoughtful look, sitting by his mother's side, or playing on the banks of the Cydnus in his native city of Tarsus, and that hoary-headed apostle who received the crown of martyrdom in Rome, were years which have a story to tell—a lesson which we do well to learn—a secret worth more than all the world's philosophy besides.

Fortunately for us the story of that wonderful life and the secret of its overmastering power have been set forth so clearly by the apostle himself that we need not miss their invaluable lessons.

What was it, then, that elevated this Hebrew youth to such a pinnacle of honor and put the crown of pre-eminence upon his head? Can other men, can we, claim brotherhood with this stalwart hero? Can we stand beside him in the victorious warfare, do our life-work as he did his, achieve victory as did he, and leave to succeeding generations an ever-widening circle of undying, beneficent influence?

A careful study of the man, the leading traits of his character, and the governing principles of his life, will aid us in answering these questions.

Look, then, at this remarkable man, as he descends from this lofty pedestal of supernatural greatness upon which imagination has placed him, and we see him standing by our side, a man not at all extraordinary in appearance, with nothing essential to distinguish him from other men, save some marked physical weaknesses and defects. There he stands unveiled before you. Slender in form, short in stature, with features strongly marked, a face beaming with animated expression revealing the intensity of thought and feeling which glow within, aquiline nose, lofty forehead, sanguine-bilious temperament, eyes with keen but kindly penetrating gaze, notwithstanding

their diseased condition, which somewhat impairs his vision, speech so defective that he cannot be a master of Ciceronian or of Demosthenic oratory, though the fiery force and resistless logic of his words render them eloquent and convincing: such in physical contour and appearance is the conjectural portrait of the man whose deeds have revolutionized society and whose words are ringing through the world to-day, stirring the hearts of men with a force which the ages have not diminished.

Surely his strength came not from a commanding figure, nor chiefly from any extraordinary natural endowments, though these were indeed great. The principal secret of his greatness and power must be sought elsewhere. We must look into that character, with its elements of strength compacted and intensified by an unseen but not unknown factor; we must study that life, with its mighty forces and inspiration, if we would learn the sources whence this great master-spirit drew his nourishment and gathered his might.

St. Paul's whole life was under the supremacy of the greatest forces that ever energized the powers of man—the supremacy of a regnant conscience, the supremacy of an overmastering moral purpose, the supremacy of an all-conquering faith; these are the powers that held in their firm grasp all the faculties of that ardent nature and employed them all for the noblest ends that ever engaged an intelligent being.

Let us examine a little more closely the reign of these three kingly powers over this loyal subject.

I. Here, then, is a man whose entire being is under *the supremacy of conscience*. For once, at least, in the history of the race, this regal faculty sits on the throne and exercises supreme command. For once, humanity has a chance to see to what heights of triumph a mortal life may be exalted, when the mandates of conscience are always and unhesitatingly obeyed, and there is never an occasion for suspicion concerning the loyalty of the whole nature to God and duty.

St. Paul differed widely from the millions of men above whom he towered, in this: his absolute, unquestioning, unremitting loyalty to the Supreme Power and to the solemn voice of duty. With other men conscience often has *theoretical* supremacy; with St. Paul its reign was *actual*. Other men may waver and fluctuate in their obedience to its behests; St. Paul is held to this central power as steadily as the planets to the sun. This never-wavering loyalty to right, as he saw the right, gave to his whole life an element of *sincerity* which was utterly beyond suspicion. There was no sham about this man. What he *seemed* to be, that he *was*. What he declared to another, that his inmost soul commended as truth and attested to its own secret tribunal.

Underlying every great character and every illus-

trious life is the bed-rock of sincerity. False as are the ways of men, prevalent as the faith of mankind seems to be in the practice of deceit and pretense, wide and ruinous as is the reign of insincerity, yet history records not a single really great name that is not indissolubly linked with a truly sincere nature. No other foundation is firm enough to sustain the monumental structure of a grandly noble character which shall live through the ages.

This unswerving conscientiousness and sincerity characterized the earlier as well as the later years of the apostle—marked the life of Saul, the student and the Pharisee, as well as of Paul, the evangelist of the new Christian faith.

Mark that young man as he bids adieu to his Tarsus home and wends his way to Jerusalem to prosecute his studies in the school of the distinguished scholar, Gamaliel. He is no trifler with life's stern verities, no compromiser with her solemn duties, no doubter of her eternal certitudes ; he dallies not with his conscience, toys not with time, and mortgages no moment of the future for the sinful gratifications of the present.

See him as he stands amid the crowd at Jerusalem when the protomartyr Stephen falls amid a shower of pelting stones, and the "young man" Saul gives his assent to the bloody assault ; see him afterward, as with fiery zeal he pursues the adherents of this new religion to the distant city of Damascus,

persecuting them to the death. A bitter persecutor he is ; a dishonest, insincere man he is not.

It is time this illustrious man were freed from the false imputation under which he has too long rested. His own estimate of himself as the "chief of sinners," given by his self-accusing spirit because he had so persecuted that holy Son of God whom he afterward so passionately loved, has been widely misinterpreted as placing the distinguished apostle in a base companionship with the vilest and most conscienceless vagabonds of earth.

Let us be candid and just, and let us not distort nor pervert the truth for any supposed magnifying of the grace of God, or any historical illustration of its power to save the worst of men. Thank God, there is no question about *that* assuring fact! The New Testament records and the uninspired histories of the Christian centuries attest the Gospel's power "to save unto the uttermost" the lost and lowest among the sons of men.

No apology is needed for St. Paul ; he never made one for himself. I do not propose to defend or to justify him. A sinner he was, fighting against the crucified Christ, a stanch and uncompromising religionist of the Pharisaic school, a zealous opposer of what he believed to be a baneful heresy ; but a low and worthless character, a cunning trickster, a thoughtless pleasure-seeker, an irreverent despiser of

law and order and goodness, a sensualist, surrendering to the behests of appetite and passion, a man of low aims and selfish ambition, grasping after the world's baubles, sacrificing honor for promotion, integrity for gain—all this, and much more of similar character that makes the commonalty of sinful men, *St. Paul never was*. Nothing cheap, nothing mean and despicable, nothing unmanly, ever found place in the life of this wonderful man.

And this sincerity of character and loyalty to conscience constitute the basis on which the conversion and apostolic life of St. Paul rest. On such a foundation only could such a superstructure be reared.

That youth sadly errs who supposes that wasted years, spent in an aimless, insincere life, with no acknowledgment of the sovereignty of conscience and no obedience to the voice of duty, *can* be other than an utter and irremediable loss; can have any other issue than wholly to destroy the hope and possibility of future greatness and worth.

Conversion is, indeed, a divine work; but only that heart in which honesty and conscientiousness abide does the Spirit make his sanctuary.

See, now, the subject of our study hastening on, with fiery, persecuting zeal, toward Damascus, that fair city of feathery palms and fragrant roses and gardens of delight, that sits like a queen upon her gorgeous throne in the East. Approaching the city,

the midday Syrian sun beating full upon him, an unearthly light suddenly envelops him, an unseen power smites him to the earth, and a voice breaks upon his astonished ear with resistless pathos, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Listen to the response of this strong-hearted persecutor. I said his whole being was under the supremacy of conscience. Behold the proof once more. For the first time the light flashes clearly into his mind—or dimly, it may be, at first—but sufficient to start the question whether he may not be wrong, even in his *conscientious persecution* of the disciples of Christ. What follows the utterance of that tender voice—the incoming of that revealing light? No parleying with self; no controversy with conscience. An immediate surrender; a spontaneous outcry of an honest though misguided soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

That question reveals the soul's true and abiding attitude. That question furnishes the key which unlocks the mystery of a life whose greatness is the wonder and admiration of the ages, whose fruits are to-day feeding and feasting the nations. That question opened the door of entrance into the heart of humanity, and made the zealous persecutor the hero and benefactor of the race.

II. But the life of St. Paul was, also, under the dominion of another regnant power—the *supremacy*

of an overmastering purpose. While conscience swayed her undisputed scepter over the whole realm of his nature, a lofty purpose stimulated and guided its every faculty and power.

If Duty is the watchword of every great soul, and conscience is its master, so an ennobling purpose must impart its quickening energies, and lead its willing subject up the heights of moral greatness and high possibilities.

Every man needs the inspiration of a great purpose and a great mission to lift him above the pettiness and cheapness which are the bane of ordinary lives. Some great undertaking, with an element of heroism and moral sublimity in it, the very contemplation of which quickens the blood and fires the soul and awakens an ever-present sense of the dignity and significance of life—this is an essential condition of all great achievement.

Such an inspiring purpose and ennobling work stirred the heart and stimulated the powers of St. Paul. Though nothing low had previously ruled or influenced him, it happened to him—as it has to many another man at his conversion—that the supreme purpose of life was formed in that supreme hour when the transforming touch of the divine hand was felt upon the soul, and life's sublime work opened before the clarified vision.

The answer to that question, "What wilt thou

have me to do?" revealed to him, as it does to every one who honestly propounds it, a work which Divine Wisdom had planned—a work which, in the apostle's case, lifted him to the highest summit of human greatness.

His mission was soon well defined. A great purpose now took possession of this true convert to the Christian faith—a purpose high enough for an archangel, inspiring enough to exalt one to companionship with seraphs. On the heart and hands of this one man, of slender frame, oppressed with physical weaknesses, rested the publishing of the Gospel to the entire Gentile world.

Think of that stupendous work, and of the resolute purpose to undertake it. You who complain of life's barrenness or burden; you who pine in the leanness of a purposeless life, or pant under the weight of difficult tasks; you who shrink from worthy undertakings and tremble with timid heart at the sacred call of duty—think of the apostle's amazing work, as the ladder by which he climbed to the heights of moral pre-eminence, and learn a lesson of courage and patience and fidelity.

Complain of the magnitude or difficulty of our work! As well might the athlete complain of the food which gives him strength and the exercise which imparts vigor and suppleness to his muscles. Complain of foreign mission work and home evangelization

and of too many great enterprises "overtaxing the ability of the Church and unnerving its 'energies!'" Heaven open our eyes to see that the one prime *cause* of our weakness and imperfect success is *the lack of some great, commanding, all-inspiring enterprise*, resting—like the world on Atlas—upon the heart of every one of us, urging us on to something more worthy of ourselves and the greatness of our destiny!

And that work, on which the purpose of our life centers, must be with us—as it was with St. Paul—*something beyond ourselves*; something reaching out toward humanity, and embracing in its broad beneficence the entire brotherhood of man. There was nothing narrow, local, or selfish in this purpose and mission of the great apostle.

Little men live for themselves and grow smaller as they tread their daily round of cheap and petty pursuits. Great men live for humanity, and grow to commanding stature by the very breadth of their purpose and the grandeur of their undertakings.

Ah, friends, when shall we learn that it is the bane of our lives that *our* moral purpose is so narrow, and our life-work so insignificant and self-centered? Happy will it be for us and for humanity if from this world-admired apostle we learn to get the *selfish spirit* of the world *out* of our hearts by taking the *true interests* of the world *upon* our hearts.

This high and far-reaching purpose of St. Paul was

single, and concentrated upon *one all-embracing object*. He saw that the supreme need of men every-where, and of every man, was a personal saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Every man was a sinner needing to be saved; Christ was a Saviour for every man. To bring together, in holy, happy, heaven-enduring union, the perishing sinner and the perfect Saviour was the one all-engrossing object of his life. It held under its uninterrupted sway all the powers of his being, all the hours of his existence. Like the heart that beat within that frail but restless body, carelessly sending the crimson currents through his whole physical frame, so the ceaseless throbbings of that great purpose sent the vital currents of holy energy and unwearying endeavor through his whole life.

See him as in the prosecution of his inspiring mission he journeys from city to city, from province to province, over the vast Roman empire and the Gentile world! No obstacles can hinder him, no weakness or pain of body deter him, no dangers appall him, no powers intimidate him, no enemies conquer him, no prisons confine him so as to suppress his teachings or bind the word of God which he declares.

He is under arrest at Jerusalem, because of his zealous preaching of the new Gospel of grace; but while borne away from the infuriated crowd of Jews, by the Roman guard, he begs permission of the captain, and pausing on the stair-case as he ascends to

the barracks in the Tower of St. Antonio, he preaches Christ to the maddened throng below, and commands a respectful hearing. He has a *passion for souls*, and he *must* declare that truth which burns within his heart, whatever circumstances surround him.

He is a prisoner in the palace prison at Cesarea; but he preaches Christ and the terrors of violated law to the profligate Roman governors and guilty Jewish rulers, who cannot but give him audience. He is a traveler on ship-board; but never for a moment does he forget his mission, and whether in calm or storm and shipwreck he preaches to his fellow-voyagers, and becomes the master-spirit among a motley crowd of officers and crew and passengers on a Mediterranean corn-ship. He is waiting with his shipwrecked companions, at Malta, suffering a forced and dreary delay; but he proclaims there, among the barbarian inhabitants and their Roman rulers, the story of the crucified and risen Christ, wins converts, and plants a Christian Church. He is incarcerated in a Roman dungeon, but he superintends the entire infant Church, and sends out words of charge and cheer which have sounded down the ages and given inspiration, courage, and hope to millions of weary hearts.

He is not deceived by the common illusion concerning a golden *future* of favoring circumstances, in which men vainly promise themselves they will do some worthy work; but he *does* that work in the

fleeting *present*, however seemingly unpropitious the occasion may be.

Yes, one work, and one only, has this enthusiastic apostle to do; and this one work he lays with solemn emphasis upon us, that by it our lives may be ennobled and men may be lifted to fellowship with God—"Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" *this* was his one aim in life; this should be ours as well.

III. But the supremacy of conscience and of a great purpose are not sufficient in themselves alone to produce such a character and such a life as St. Paul presents for our study. To these two ruling forces must be added another—greater than either, and co-ordinate with both—*the supremacy of an all-conquering faith.*

No man can reach the summit of power, no life can compass the highest results, that is not lifted far above the plane of nature into the realm of the supernatural. It is the tendency of our age, and the special aim of a certain school of writers, to eliminate the supernatural from human affairs. In just so far as this object is accomplished will manhood be smitten and the moral stature of mankind be diminished. God gave to man spirit wings as well as fleshly feet; he cannot rise to loftiest heights of being by plodding ever on the solid ground. He must use

the higher as well as the lower faculties with which he is endowed.

St. Paul possessed superior natural endowments and superior culture; he combined in himself the three greatest and most vital forces of his age, Roman citizenship, Grecian culture, and the Hebrew religion; but not all of these united would have lifted him to such eminence as he attained, nor have handed his name down to succeeding generations, without the added and greater element of faith in the supernatural—especially the supernatural Messiah—which, from the moment of his conversion to that of his martyrdom, became the inspiration of his life.

Faith, real, vital, practical, all-conquering faith, is the factor which, more than all others, solves the problem of his stupendous achievements. That faith seized and held with unyielding grasp all the great facts and truths of Christianity, and pressed them so closely to his own heart that its every pulsation felt their mighty force. That faith held, beyond a question, the necessity and the possibility of a supernatural change of heart for every man.

St. Paul believed in conversion. He was himself a converted man. Never could that sovereign fact be blotted from his memory; nay, more: never could its self-evidencing power be separated from his being. An historic fact it was indeed, with time and place and circumstances and crisis experience all distinctly

marked ; but it was more than that : it was a *perpetuated fact*, with evidence as convincing and fruits as manifest each new day of his life as when the voice divine first charmed his ear and the Spirit's power changed the persecutor to a devout apostle. Such a marvelous change, blossoming into richest fruits of blessing, St. Paul sought, with tender earnestness, for every man.

Friends, nothing more vitally affects our lives than our faith or unbelief in this fundamental truth of Christianity. Nothing so unnerves and paralyzes the arm of Christian endeavor as skepticism in regard to the supernatural change and the supernatural life through Jesus Christ.

The Church needs, the world needs, thoroughly converted men, who, with quenchless zeal, shall seek to bring their fellows into the same divine fellowship with a divine Christ. And this leads me to say that the apostle's faith united him to a personal Christ in a union which was as real and conscious as ever joined two hearts together in holiest of earthly fellowships.

Christ to him was not a myth, not merely the incomparable Teacher of Galilee, not the theoretic and historic Saviour of men ; he was infinitely more than that, *the ever-present Partner of his life*, the unfailing Source of his strength. His faith perpetually saw this personal Jesus, felt the warm beating of his

loving heart, heard his sacred voice in solemn command or inspiring promise, and walked with him as with an earthly friend. As well separate the spirit from the body, the beating heart from the respiring lungs, as separate this inspired apostle from this inspiring Christ.

What is he, or what is his life, without this divine union? Hear him, as he reveals the secret of his power: "I am *crucified with Christ*; nevertheless I live;" and then, checking his utterance as though he dare not for a moment think of himself as having any life at all independent of Christ, he adds, "*Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*:" and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is enough. We need no further explanation of this man's marvelous achievements. *Anything* is possible to such a man. Indeed, it is no longer a question of *human ability* at all, but of human *co-operation* with the divine Christ—the natural man giving the supernatural agency full play and power.

Yes, St. Paul was "crucified with Christ," "dead with Christ," "buried with Christ," "risen with Christ," and on his spirit-illuminated mind rested no shadow of doubt that he would ultimately be "glorified with Christ."

The faith of St. Paul was a genuine, actual belief in the Christian creed. The weakness—and must I not

add, worthlessness?—of many a theoretical Christian have their cause in the fact that they *believe nothing*. Our age is smitten with a mania for skepticism; the great verities of Christianity, if not denied, are held by too many—even within the Church—with a questioning, hesitating faith. Nothing in Christianity to them seems real; nothing inspires enthusiasm, much less the heroic spirit.

Let me utter, my brethren, a note of warning in your ears against this pusillanimous faith. Be assured its fruit is a pusillanimous manhood. Behold in strong contrast with this feeble, enervating faith of our times the strong and strength-inspiring faith of the great apostle. To him Christianity was not a system of negations, but of positive affirmations; he dealt not with probabilities, but with unquestioned certainties.

Faith with him was not an intellectual assent to dogmas; it was a heart-belief in demonstrated facts. It was not a *theory* which he held; it was a *conviction* which *held him*, mind, soul, body, under its supreme sway. It was not a profession on his lips alone; it was a passion burning with all-consuming flame in his inmost heart. Hence the realness of the whole system of Christian truth to this apostle. Sin, death, the doom of the impenitent, were all dark and terrible realities to him; over against this fearful background stood the sublime verities of Christianity—Christ, salvation, eternal life, shedding their inspiring light

upon the midnight gloom—a rainbow spanning with its arch of hope the black, vaulted sky of sin.

Yes, it was all real to him. *He believed*, and *therefore* he spoke with an earnestness that forced its way into men's hearts. He believed, and therefore he prayed with a fervor of devotion that made the heavens bend in blessing over him and bathe him with their holy light and surround him with celestial guards. He believed, and therefore he wept over lost men tears of love and sympathy which burned conviction into thoughtless minds and opened a door of entrance for the truth into stubborn hearts. He believed, and his faith sent him as an ambassador from the Supreme Power to guilty men every-where, bearing messages of reconciliation and promises of pardon and heaven.

Do we think that Christian effort was something other and easier to him than it is to us? Follow him in his accustomed toil. He is in Ephesus, the proud center of Eastern splendor. For three years the apostle tarries in this city. It was a part of his wise policy to take and hold the great cities for Christ. How does he spend those years? There is much to attract the lover of art, the philosopher, the scholar. St. Paul is fitted by nature and by culture to enjoy all that wealth and learning and the æsthetic taste can furnish. But there are perishing men here, groping in ignorance of the true

God and dying in their sins. It costs him something to gain access to them. The great Temple of Diana—one of the world's seven wonders—is here; the city is devoted to the worship of the false goddess, and its business is largely involved in the support of the false religion. Every effort to gain a convert to the truth excites hatred and persecution. Yet he heeds it not; fearless and tireless, he walks the streets and visits the thoroughfares of the crowded city, catching the ears of men, if he may, as they throng the marts of trade or pass back and forth to the stadium, the theater, the agora, or as they saunter on the porticoes of the vast temple.

He is often mocked, and sometimes mobbed. It is nothing to him. Other men might abandon so disagreeable and hopeless a work, not he. Now and then some one more thoughtful than the others listens to his words. How he follows such a one with loving zeal and unwearying effort! How he seeks out his residence, though it be of the humblest character, visits him at his home, makes his impassioned appeal, or reasons with convincing logic, beseeches him with the earnestness of one seeking to save another's life; nay, let us not withhold the whole truth: the strong, manly, cultured apostle *weeps* over the stranger with the tenderness and affection of a mother for the child of her love, and lingers with importunate entreaties far into the hours of night!

This is the fruit of the apostle's faith—a faith that manifests itself by works. No wonder men could not resist such tender and tearful entreaties. I am not painting a fancy picture. Hear this true and sincere believer as he himself tells the story of his labors in Ephesus. A Church was planted there. Such zeal and effort would establish a Christian Church anywhere, would fill the world with trophies of the cross, and speed the coming of the millennial day. St. Paul afterward met the elders at Miletus and spoke to them these truthful words, which portray in graphic colors his character and his labor: “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That is the way in which the most eminent man of the Christian Church did his work and achieved his greatness and success. How stand we beside him as respects the genuineness of our faith measured by the zeal and sacrifice of our life?

Sacrifice! Ah, that was something more than a

romantic sentiment with this true-hearted man. Hear him still further as he gives us another glimpse of his real life while he talks to these Ephesian brethren: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. *But none of these things move me*, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

It is no marvel that the people who really knew this glorious man loved him with an ardent affection. It is no wonder that as he "kneeled down, and prayed" with this disciple band, "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."

Such is an imperfect sketch of the character and life of this greatest hero of the Christian Church. So small a tribute to so great a man, so poor a portrait of so grand a subject, only illustrates the vast distance between the actual and the ideal in our best endeavors. Could I have portrayed the character of St. Paul as the picture hangs in its ideal grandeur before my mind and lends its potent charm to almost every hour of life, it would have been a widely different picture from this. Perhaps it might have

seemed that there was much exaggeration in the coloring. It is better we should feel that the picture falls, as it does, far below the original. Thus may we realize in greater force the value of his inspiring example.

IV. St. Paul, better, perhaps, than any other man, illustrates what the spirit of Christ can do for a mortal man, and what such a man, fully possessed of that spirit, can do for the world. The vital point of difference between the apostle and the mass of mankind—shall we not sorrowfully say?—between him and ourselves—is in this: *He treated Christianity as a fact; they and we treat it as a fiction*; he believed it, we assent to it; he lived it, we profess it; it accomplished its purposed and legitimate end in him, it is restrained in us; in him we see its strength and abundant fruits, in us, alas! weakness and barrenness of results.

Shall we learn from him the lesson we so greatly need to learn? Shall we henceforth let Christ and his truth have their rightful supremacy over our lives, that the world may see the most powerful argument for the Christian faith and the most convincing evidences of its divine power?

This is the greatest need of our age. Its skepticism must be met and vanquished by the all-conquering argument of a positive, aggressive, consistent faith, lived, incarnated, in a multitude of living "epistles known and read of all men."

Think not the day is past for such great deeds and great results as the life of St. Paul presents. His mission, as the first apostle to the heathen world, was peculiar; but a mission not less inspiring calls us to like devotion and heroism. Never has there been an age that summoned Christian men to greater enterprises, presented greater opportunities, and demanded greater endeavor than does the age in which we are living.

Our present type of Christianity has too little of the heroic element in it to be a thing of power; shorn of suffering and of heroism, it is shorn of its strength; crowned with the world's honor, sharing the world's fellowship, living in the world's ease, it is robbed of those mighty victories which the apostle Paul won, and which may be won again by a like surrender to its sovereign sway. "Crucified with Christ," sharing in "the fellowship of his sufferings," living "conformably to his death." Are not these almost unmeaning phrases with us?

We might, indeed, follow Christ to death were that the only alternative; but to follow him through all the insidious temptations of our modern society, in a life of entire obedience and conformity to his spirit—can we do that? Do we do that, as did this self-renouncing apostle? An ease-loving Christianity, a pleasure-seeking Christianity, a Christianity of eminent respectability, may do for a sunny day in a sinless world; but O, my brethren, this world of sin and

sorrow and death imperatively demands a Christianity of genuine self-sacrifice! Who will enter the heroic lists, emulate the great apostle, and like him win the pre-eminent honor?

I cannot but believe that the fires of a holy ambition to do like valiant service, and achieve like grand results, are kindled in the heart of many a youth before me.

Let not that ambition exhaust itself in a sickly sentiment of admiration for this pre-eminent character, but rather may it urge you on to a worthy imitation of his undaunted spirit and self-surrendering life.

How strikingly St. Paul illustrates the superiority of moral greatness over any other type of greatness! How strongly has this great apostle endeared himself to the whole Christian world! What other name, save that of the Man of Nazareth, does the Christian Church cherish with such grateful affection?

Go to the shrines of human greatness; visit the scenes amid which the world's illustrious men have lived. You are in Athens, center of ancient civilization and culture, "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence." You climb the Acropolis, and walk amid the storied ruins of the Parthenon, with memories of Pericles and Solon and Phidias, and a host of statesmen and warriors and philosophers; your eye sweeps over the surrounding country with the summits of Hymettus and Pentelicus in full view, and visions of

the heroes of Marathon and Salamis floating before you ; you walk along the banks of the Ilissus, through the agora, amid the scenes where Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle taught ; you stand in the Pnyx, where Demosthenes stirred the hearts of the Athenian populace with his fiery philippics ; all Athens' great and distinguished dead live and move before you. But, if your heart be as mine, no other spot in that classic city will hold you under its magic spell as does the rocky summit of Mars Hill where St. Paul met the proud philosophers, and with masterly words of logic and persuasion preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

You will love to repair to this retired height at the close of each busy day, and, with the vision of this peerless apostle and his wondering audience before you, you will linger there until the sunlight has faded from the rugged form of Lycabettus, and the sentinels of the sky have lighted their watch-fires ; and with a flood of holy and tender memories you will return to your lodgings amid the deep and weird shadows of the night. Yes, great as are the heroes of Grecian story, greater still is this hero of the Christian faith.

You are in Rome, seat of empire and center of classic history and art for many a century. You climb her seven hills ; you walk among her silent yet eloquent ruins. A thousand thrilling memories throng

the mind. The long array of her distinguished men passes before you. You stand in the Forum where Cicero's stately periods delighted his listening audiences; you visit the massive Coliseum with its curdling memories of blood and martyrdom; you walk amid the ruins of the palace of the Cæsars; you recall the tragic story of Brutus and Julius Cæsar; you think of Horace and Livy and Tacitus, of the learned and the great, until the mind is dazed and reality seems a dream. But with this swelling tide of historic associations sweeping over you, I say again, if your heart be like mine, no figure will so completely fill the horizon of your thought, no memory will so stir the fountains of feeling, as that of Paul, the apostle, the prisoner, the martyr.

The scene of his apostolic labors, of his imprisonment and martyrdom, the place where he wrote his inspired epistles, how strangely has this wonderful man filled this classic city with his history; how strongly does he hold you under its resistless fascination! With loving enthusiasm you trace his footsteps throughout the city. You linger on the Appian Way where he first entered it; you visit the churches of St. Pudentia and St. Clemens, because of their association with his name; you go down into the crypt of the church of *San Maria via Lata*, on the spot where it is supposed he was first confined, and read on the stone pillar the inscription taken from the

apostle's exulting prison letter, "But the word of God is not bound;" you pass over into the Ghetto, the Jewish quarter, and walk with stifling emotions through the church of *San Paolo in Allo regola*, the not improbable site of that never-to-be-forgotten "hired house," in which, as a liberally-treated prisoner, he lived for two years, preaching Christ with untiring zeal to all who would give him audience.

You go down, with lighted torch in hand, into the dark and famous Mamertine prison, where tradition locates his closer confinement, and standing there in the circular dungeon cut out of the solid tufa rock, dripping with the gathered damp of ages, you see, with a vividness which seems like reality, the aged veteran sitting there shivering in the chill air, without the much-needed "cloak" "left at Troas," writing, with words of tender appeal and triumphant assurance, to his loved son in the Gospel, Timothy; and as the vision fills your mind the tear-drops will be silently wiped from moistened eyes.

One more place you cannot but visit with deepest feeling and tenderest interest. You pass outside the Ostian gate; you think of that day in the early June when the Italian sun shone brightly on the sad scene as the aged apostle was escorted out of that gloomy prison by a guard of Roman soldiers. You see him as with firm step he passes along, amid the jeers and jests of the motley crowd. The company have soon

reached the limits of the city walls and are on the Ostian Way. This same pyramid of Caius Cestius, standing to-day by the gate, looked calmly down upon the apostle as he marched bravely out to meet his fate.

The hour has at length come. The itinerant's journeys are ended ; the missionary's labors are finished ; the apostle's sufferings are over ; the last charge has been given ; the last prayer offered ; the last tear shed ; the last scourging received ; the battle-scarred warrior receives his discharge ; the long-confined prisoner gains his release. The executioner's sword parts the aching head from the suffering body, and St. Paul is no more a citizen of earth, but the chiefest saint in the martyr throng of heaven. No more a citizen of earth, did I say ? Let me recall that word. He began to live, in that hour of his martyrdom, a new and more victorious life on earth ; he lives to-day, in the hearts and lives of multiplied thousands, and his life will flow on with ever-increasing power through the ages of time. With saddened heart and subdued feeling and possibly tearful eyes you enter that imposing mausoleum of "St. Paul without the walls," where tradition has placed the body of the great apostle, and read in a new light the inscription placed upon his tomb, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

**SELF-RESPECT
AND SELF-CONTROL.**

"Keep thyself pure."—PAUL.

**"True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect and still revere himself
In lowliness of heart."—WORDSWORTH.**

**"The bravest trophy ever man obtained
Is that which o'er himself himself hath gained."
—EARL OF STIRLING.**

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—PROVERBS xvi, 32.

THE world has combined to put honors on the heads of military heroes. Victories won on gory battle-fields are commemorated in song and story and monumental shaft.

Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, sacred temples though they are, largely commemorate the deeds of such secular heroes. But the sacred Scriptures, with higher wisdom and more just discrimination, put the brighter aureola of fame around the brow of the moral victor. Above all conquest of cities and states is the greater conquest of self.

Nor is this the language of hyperbole, but of unqualified truth. Greater *is* the man who conquers *himself*, who rules his own spirit, and brings his whole being under the supremacy of will, than he who takes a city. Greater in his character, deeds, results. Let us give a few thoughtful moments to a subject so worthy of attention.

Here is a young man ; the fire of intelligence flashes

in his eye and glows upon his countenance. You try to cast the horoscope of his future. What will he *be*? What will he *do* in this great world? We need not look into the heavens above him, nor at the circumstances around him; if only we can measure the forces within him, the question is answered. Nine tenths of all the factors of the problem are in himself; and he will solve it *for* himself, and not another for him. This is a trite saying, unquestionably; so are all maxims of mathematics and of philosophy; nevertheless, every new comer on the stage must learn them for himself. So must he learn this more important truth. He is a magazine of power, for good or for evil; how will it be directed, how utilized? He has startling possibilities. He may be a Garfield or a Guiteau, a Paul or a Nero.

The outcome of his life will depend chiefly on the answer to two questions: What he *thinks of himself*; what he *does with himself*. If he mistakes in these two respects, cherishes false and unworthy views of himself, or permits misrule and disorder to run riot with his own powers, not all the friends on earth, nor all the friendly powers in heaven, can make a man of him, or make a success out of his life.

To put the same truth in positive form, let us say that the two closely-related and all-essential conditions of genuine manhood—which means always genuine success—are *self-respect* and *self-control*.

What *are* these two transcendent qualities? and what are the *fruits* they yield?

I. *Self-respect.*

1. Entering into self-respect as a constituent element is a sense of the *dignity* which belongs to humanity. The self-respecting man sees ever, and feels as well as sees, the wide distinction between a rational and an irrational being; sees the one crowned with God's image and honored with God's companionship; and, lifted above his animalism by the consciousness of such exaltation, he repeats to himself as often as passion's voices allure him, and the lower forces ply him, *I am a man.*

2. Another element of self-respect is the sense of one's *individuality*, and the consequent maintenance of one's selfhood. One is forced to the belief that few men have any just appreciation of the value of their individual being, or see in it any special meaning or power. It is amazing how willing most men seem to be to sink their individuality in the sea of popular sentiment. Forgetful of their own selfhood, they follow the crowd in its last crazy impulses, no matter where or what for, or with what consequences—be it to hear the latest æsthetic *dilettante* or the last imported specimen of Old World impudence or immorality, or to do some *outré* thing by way of distinction, forgetting that this is the very way by which fools have advertised themselves through all time.

Distinction, in such a world as this, is gained, not by following the multitude, but by standing aside in your own personality, while the vulgar crowd sweep by; not by gliding along with the popular current, be it in State, or Church, or society, or college, but by resisting that current, however rapid it may be, and keeping your own footing, though all the cowards and poltroons who float by you should taunt you with the cowardice which they so conspicuously exhibit.

There is no more humiliating evidence of imbecility than when a young man offers to himself, or to another, as reason for his conduct, the cheap and silly excuse, "They all do it." What is that but a pitiful confession that he has no personality to maintain; that he has lost *himself* in the mob, that he is a feather floating on the tide, and not a rock, withstanding its force? What if they do "all do it?" Who is this mighty "all?" "The mass, that is to say, collective mediocrity," says Thackeray.

That is an excellent reason for *not* doing a thing, unless there is some wise reason of an independent character why you should follow the multitude. Said Horace Bushnell to his younger brother, who had been to a cheap show, and came home crest-fallen, "The next time that you see the whole world doing something, be sure not to go with them unless you have some better reason." That was the germ of strong independence out of which grew the sturdy

manhood of that remarkable thinker. The sooner a young man learns that there are in this world more silly people than wise, more weak than strong, the better are his chances of being a man.

I am not afraid of a young man who has enough individuality to do a little of his own thinking and acting, on an independent basis. There is, to be sure, a little peril in it, but vastly less than in self-annihilation or absorption into the mass. The world, in friendly or unfriendly spirit, can be safely trusted to take the surplus conceit out of him, and then there will be a substantial residue of independence and manliness left for a good working basis.

3. Along with a sense of the dignity of one's being and his real individuality comes an insight into the *significance* of his life—what it is, what it means, what it embraces, whence it came, how far it reaches, what infinitudes and eternities it takes in, and consequently its grandeur and its mystery.

4. And in immediate connection with this view of life's significance comes the overmastering thought of its measureless *responsibilities*. This distinctively individual being of whose wealth you are now becoming thoroughly conscious, with all the dignity and depth of meaning embodied in him, stands related to other equally great and worthy beings; nay, greater and more worthy. What are these relations to other beings that touch and inspire your life? What

obligations, rights, duties, arise thence? The great questions of ethics and of religion spring spontaneously in the mind when one begins to know and rightly to estimate his own true self.

5. What should follow, as a related sentiment, but the thought of life's *sacredness*? Surely a being of such dignity, so dowered and distinguished by God, with such powers within him, and such destiny before him, must possess a sacred character. "And this is myself," says the thoughtful young man, in whom this quality of self-respect is beginning to get a firm footing. "I am such a being as this. I am this mystery of mysteries, this miracle of miracles, this magisterial possessor of powers so high and possibilities so great that an angel might covet them. I must carry myself as befits one of such distinction. A rational man, I must not consort with the brutes, nor give place to irrational acts. I must not be a trifler, an idler, an imitator, a trickster, a parasite, a seeker of cheap pleasures and petty honors. There is power in me, there is meaning in my life, and there must be a purpose. God has a place for me, which I must find and follow. There is a high destiny before me, which I must not miss." And so life's greatness and majesty begin to stretch away into infinite reaches of an ideal world, which is, nevertheless, more real than this, and which sends back its voices and its potencies to cheer and to strengthen the receptive mind.

6. And out of these elements, this sense of the dignity, the individuality, the significance, the responsibility, and the sacredness of one's being, comes what I have said was one of the essentials of genuine manhood—a *profound self-respect*.

No man can see himself in these lights without feeling that there is too much that is great and sacred in his nature and destiny to permit him to misuse a life so richly endowed. He cannot dally with toys, nor play the clown, nor prey on a community to the worth of which he contributes nothing, nor invade the rights of others, nor occasion any necessity for them to set a police force over him to restrain his disorder, nor do aught which the truest self-respect and most delicate sense of propriety forbids.

Nor is there connected with such self-respect any measure of self-conceit, but rather the opposite. He who rightly respects himself always respects others—their opinions, rights, interests. It is the man that has no genuine self-respect who is so inflated with self-conceit that he regards neither the rights of man nor the claims of God.

II. From such a view of one's self and the life he must live, legitimately follows the other essential quality of manhood which I have mentioned—*self-control, or self-government*.

1. Imagine such a youth before us, with such views of himself, and such sentiments inspiring his breast.

What will he say to himself but this?—If such is my being—so great in significance and sacredness, in design and destiny—there must be some strong power to *preside over it*; it must be brought under wise and firm rule. This ship of destiny on which I have embarked, with so costly and priceless freight, must have some steady hand at the wheel or be wrecked. This commonwealth, with manifold powers and interests, must have a governor holding it under firm sway, or anarchy and ruin will ensue. Here is a miniature state—nay, world. *Some* kind of government is a necessity. *What* kind shall it be, and by whom administered? *Who* shall be ruler? Not my parents, nor my teachers; they are not always with me; not God alone, even, for he has committed this charge to me; who but *myself*? Besides, this government must enter the heart, and control its desires and affections; the mind, and bring into subjection its thoughts. Who but myself can administer such a government?

It is the day of days in that youth's life when this great purpose possesses him: "I must be my own master; I must bring myself into subjection; henceforth I undertake the task. Grateful for help from every source, mine is the responsibility, and neither God nor man shall witness any faltering in my honest endeavor." Then the will mounts the throne, seizes the scepter, and asserts his magisterial power. The

work of self-government thus seriously undertaken, you will seek to make no compromise with any hostile power, either within or without.

2. Installed governor over the commonwealth of your own being, by decision of your own will, you will ask, What is the scope of the government to be maintained? It must always seek your own highest interests. It must invariably respect and seek to promote the real interests of others. It must recognize the Supreme Power who made you what you are; and it must unwaveringly fulfill all obligations arising from this highest of relationships.

3. With this broad platform upon which to stand, possessing in your own mind all necessary legislative, executive, and judicial powers, what generic or specific laws will you exact and enforce for the government of your life? Since it is the commonest and clearest maxim that no government should violate the rights of others, nor antagonize its own interests, you will begin by enacting this great law of prohibition, namely :

Nothing deleterious to character—either your own or that of another—shall ever be permitted. If in earnest, you will write this law down—possibly upon paper where you can read it daily—certainly on the tablet of your heart. Not an unchaste or uncharitable word, not an impure or improper act, not a habit harmful in result or tendency, will find toleration.

But this strikes at once at a hundred indulgences. Well, *let* it strike; the heavier the blow the better the result, the greater the final victory.

Standing in this attitude toward yourself, you will not need parent or teacher to beseech you to discard the cup of intoxicating beverage, or even the filthy and poisonous weed in which men love to indulge. Your own manly will asserts its behests, and they are obeyed. You are not dependent on the uncertain honor of political demagogues to protect you with a prohibitory law. You have one of your own. Not an unseemly word nor an unbecoming act that your mother, on earth or from the serene heights of heaven, could not witness with joy, shall at any time or place, by free volition, mar the beauty of your life.

You need not the presence of teacher or monitor to deter you from unworthy acts. You are your own monitor. You can sit in the recitation-room, or mingle with your fellows in the meetings of class or school, with no one to check and no unbecoming act to be checked. Every-where, always, in solitude and in the throng, walking the street, conning your lessons, recreating with associates, the ever-operative law is upon you by self-imposition.

And you are growing strong and great under its rigorous exactions and self-executing efficiency. Passion may clamor; natural propensities may rise; appetite, ambition, apparent self-interest, former habits,

may make their appeal; associates may jeer; but the will is inexorable, and the character is untarnished, and manhood is ever in the ascendancy.

No words can measure the greatness of this victory of self-control. The truth of inspiration is strikingly illustrated in not a few of earth's vaunted heroes. They conquered cities and countries, but did not conquer themselves.

Alexander subdues the world's empires, but fails in subjugating his own heart. Napoleon gives admirable maxims by which others conquer, and his overmastering ambition sways all his other powers, but that selfish ambition leaves his own heart unsubdued. Hercules laughs at the world's impossibilities, and slays the mighty monsters, but yields to the seductions of impurity and of forbidden pleasures. Samson smites the Philistines, bears off in triumph the gates of Gaza, and yields in unmanly surrender to the charms of Delilah. Surely "he that ruleth his spirit is better"—greater in all the elements of real greatness—"than he that taketh a city." That was a true saying of the Emperor Valentinian: "Among all my victories, one only comforts me now." "What is that?" asked his friend. "I have overcome my worst enemy, my own heart."

"But this kind of life," says one, "would destroy all manly spirit." Unfortunately, this too common objector reveals the fact that he is yet living in a realm

into which conceptions of true manhood have never entered. He confounds unmanly license and disorder with manliness. The poles are not more widely separated. The young man who has mastered himself is the manliest fellow among all his associates. None equals him in generosity, in nobleness of being, in good-will to all, and in ready service for his fellows. And when the fitting time for recreation and athletic sports comes, he can leap as high, and run as rapidly, and walk as far, or perform any other manly physical feat as vigorously and valorously as any of his mates.

"This is a fine theory of manhood and of life," says another, "a really beautiful and lofty conception, but it is *ideal*."

Yes, and "ideals are the world's masters" has been wisely said. Fortunate is the youth before whose mind this ever-present ideal is kept, holding him under its magic power and charming his life into order and beauty. Unhappy is the youth who brings his life under the supremacy of no such ideal, but lets in chaos and confusion to mar its harmony and to blast its hope.

But true self-government does not stop with self-restraint. It summons its subject to high activities, and demands the right exercise of every power to the fullest measure of its ability. It involves the highest self-development, putting all one's faculties to their utmost tension to make the most and best possible

out of one's self. It implies, also, the largest helpfulness to others, and makes a man a benefactor as well as a conqueror. No moment wasted, no power perverted, no opportunity omitted—this is its great and ever-active law, filling one's being with all labor, and crowning it with all rewards.

III. It is now time to consider briefly what are the *fruits* of such self-respect and self-government? The answer in part has already been anticipated.

1. All the higher powers of your being are ennobled and given their rightful sway; all the lower are rightly held in subjection. What can be the result but that strength, development, greatness, with all their wealth and worth, shall come to one's entire being.

The conscience becomes supreme and its dictates are unquestionably obeyed. Every doubtful act is adjudged at this high tribunal, and decided in accordance with heaven's laws. All the moral powers are in full development and play. There will be no Mephistophelean monstrosities.

The will is chief executive, and gains commanding force in the exercise of its recognized authority.

God comes in as an active power, a real factor in practical life, and the whole being is brought under his sway and lifted into his glorified presence.

The entire man is at his best, every faculty in hand, held steadily to its appointed work, achieving ever its

great triumphs. No power is left to riot and destroy ; no territory of one's nature lies waste or uncultivated ; no rebellious foe is permitted to lurk within and commit his ruinous ravages in this fair heritage of heaven.

2. And thus is realized the real end of all true education. We shall find even such authority as Herbert Spencer in full agreement with us here. "In the supremacy of self-control," says he in his "Social Statics," "consists one of the perfections of the ideal man. Not to be impulsive, not to be spurred hither and thither by each desire that in turn comes uppermost ; but to be self-restrained, self-balanced, governed by the joint decision of all the feelings in council assembled, before whom every action shall have been fully debated and calmly determined—that it is which education, moral education at least, strives to produce."

This is the one determining quality on which success or failure in after life most depends. Failing here, your failure is absolute and irremediable. Success here is success assured henceforward.

Here are two youths—the one is college-bred, but without self-government ; the other was never in a college, but knows and possesses the power of self-control. For all worthy work in life the latter is immeasurably superior ; he will make a better banker, manufacturer, legislator, general in the army, or

president of the republic. Knowledge of Greek and mathematics and Latin is valuable, but placed in the balance against self-control it has not the weight of a feather or the worth of a farthing. But *true* education *embraces* self-control, and, with other acquisitions, gives the scholar great advantage.

William Pitt was once asked what quality was most essential for a Prime Minister. One of the party said, "Eloquence;" another, "Knowledge;" another, "Toil." "No," said Pitt, "it is Patience;" and patience with him had its real meaning of self-control. In this quality he himself excelled. There is an instructive monument to this great statesman in Westminster Abbey. Pitt stands erect with extended hand; another figure represents Anarchy writhing in chains at his feet, while a calm-browed figure representing History is writing down the record of his victorious achievements for posterity to read.

There is pressing need for other Pitts to conquer self, and then conquer their fellows in this disordered world. Anarchy and Wrong yet ravage the land. They need strong, self-conquered men to put them in chains. And be assured, impartial history waits to immortalize the name of the great moral heroes of to-day.

3. It is this quality of self-control which pre-eminently prepares one for great emergencies which may come to every one in life. President Hayes, in an address delivered to you on this platform, assured us

that while men often wondered at the courage and self-poise exhibited by some men in moments of great trial, and perhaps peril, as a general in battle, a ruler in times of excitement and mob-rule, it was but the result of a life-long habit of self-mastery. Supreme ability to stand firm in such a crisis hour is but the gathering up and bringing into use of the accumulated power which years of self-control have garnered up in store for just such an emergency. He who has it not, surrenders. He who has it, seizes the scepter and wins the crown of victory.

4. These are truths applicable to every one, whatever his vocation, wherever he may ply it. There is, I think, a peculiar propriety in giving them the thought they merit during our college life.

If there is one mistake more common and more fatal than others in our school-days, it is that of disconnecting the present and the future—college-life and world-life. Do we not practically think there is no very intimate connection between what we *are* and what we *do here*, and what we *shall* be and do when once the college is left behind? This is the perilous sophistry of college reasoning; *now* we can trifle, play the boy, give the spirit of young America full play, allow youthful propensities largest license, let them riotously exhibit themselves in numberless and nameless ways, even trench upon the proprieties, not to say the moralities, which are current in the outside

world. Why talk seriously about such trifles? We sometimes count it folly to be wise or serious concerning these peccadilloes, that do not mean any harm, and are only ebullitions of exuberant spirits. We may even almost resent the Puritanic spirit, as we think it, which kindly asks us, thoughtfully, to beware of these pettinesses.

Nevertheless, the great moral law is upon us as universal as the law of gravitation, and as inexorable as fate. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You can no more snatch a pebble from gravitation's grasp than you can separate the minutest act of life—within or without college walls—from its inevitable effect upon character and destiny.

"Sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny." That is the law of our being. You can hold back Niagara with the palm of your hand as easily as you can arrest the force of this law. There is not a moment of college life which is not linked with all the years that follow; not an act of trifling or disorder or unmanliness that does not project itself forward and touch the outermost verge of your future being.

Who will go forth into the whirl of life but your own proper self? *What* will you be but yourself? Suppose there are young men who go from a meeting of college, class, or society where there have

been loud voices calling, boisterous exhibitions of personal likes or dislikes, confusion and disorder, various displays of rudeness and uncouth manners, in which they have participated, or, at best, have quietly tolerated. They go out into society; the same men are soon called to participate in a meeting of citizens on public business; the rough and rowdy element will always be present. What will these college men carry with them but the habits and manners which they acquired and exhibited in college? If such has been their training in college, what will they be but a part of the mob when mob-rule is rampant? What will they do but join in the rudeness which habit has made second nature to them? What will they be but *themselves*?

And so in the largest number of cases the college trifle will be the worthless citizen; the college rowdy, the town disturber of the peace; the college trickster and schemer, the political demagogue, be it in Church or State.

On the other hand, if a young man goes from college—as may I not hope all of you and all others will ever go from this University?—having behind him years of training, under the ennobling influence of self-respect and self-control, what will he be in private life but the well-balanced, gentle-mannered, pure-minded, strong and worthy citizen that society greatly needs and waits to honor?

5. These are the qualities out of which men are made. It would be difficult to name a really great man in ancient or in modern times that did not possess them in marked degree.

Socrates, calmly conversing with his friends, with the death-bearing cup of hemlock in his hands; William the Silent, noted for his calm courage and unconquerable determination, as Mr. Motley says, "the rock in the ocean, tranquil amid raging billows;" the Duke of Wellington, "at Waterloo and elsewhere," giving "his orders in the most critical moments without the slightest excitement, and in a tone of voice almost more than usually subdued." These are but specimens with which the pages of history teem. How conspicuously these qualities shone in the first President of the American nation, the illustrious Washington, every youth knows; and how not less conspicuously were they exhibited in the character of the latest chosen to that high station, the lamented Garfield, is already widely known to the civilized world.

One finds it difficult to conceive of Garfield as ever being other than an earnest-minded, well-mannered, self-poised youth, respecting himself, and commanding the respect of all who knew him. Such he was on the farm, in the humble home, the district school, the academy, the college, the army, in Congress, and in the Presidential mansion. And in his manly

character and unparalleled advance to multiplied and distinguished honors he speaks to-day, and will continue to speak, to American youth, calling them, with earnest, solemn tones, to respect themselves, that others may respect them; to master themselves, that they may command others.

Here, then, let us pause in the impetuous rush of life's passionate tide, and hear and heed these voices of wisdom which call us to their serene heights. Let us hear the octogenarian "Sage of Concord" as he tells us that "self-respect is the early form in which greatness appears;" that "it is our practical perception of the Deity in man." Let us listen to Napoleon, better adviser than exemplar, giving advice to his brother, King Joseph, of Spain: "I have only one counsel for you—*Be master!*" Let us listen to England's poet-laureate as he sings in words as beautiful as true:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone, lead life to sovereign power."

Above all, let us hear the world's Saviour and the world's Conqueror, as he reveals to us the secret of the greatest victories and the greatest possessions in these words of measureless meaning: "The meek shall inherit the earth."

THE END.

EXTRACTS FROM NOTICES OF THE AMERICAN EDITION.

From Bishop J. F. Hurst, D.D., LL.D.: "As a work which will help to make the most and the best out of the average young man, I would not know where to go to find its equal. Its intensity is all needed, and its scope is broad. I trust it will have a wide circulation, and help many a young mind to start aright, that it may go aright."

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From Wm. G. Williams, D.D., LL.D., *Prof. of Greek in Ohio Wesleyan University*: "The Church and the public are much indebted to President Payne for this volume of his Sabbath afternoon lectures; and the book will, no doubt, meet a hearty welcome not more for the reputation of the author than for its intrinsic worth. Most of these discourses I heard when delivered in the college course; and I have now gone through the volume with renewed and increased interest. I am sure that the reader, and especially the youthful reader, of this volume has never had more eloquent, earnest, and impressive appeals to his conscience or more useful helps toward the formation of character."

From Ex-President Frederick Merrick, *Lecturer on Natural Religion, Ohio Wesleyan University*: "An excellent book; sound in doctrine, wise in practical suggestions, attractive in style, admirably adapted to guard the young against the seductive temptations which beset their path, and to awaken aspiration for whatever is pure and ennobling. Teachers would do well to recommend it to their pupils, and parents to buy it for their children."

Extracts from Notices (continued).

From C. A. L. Reed, M.D., *Editor of the Clinical Brief*: "I have read 'Guides and Guards' through, and I now take the liberty, on behalf of the generation to which I belong, of thanking you for writing such a book. It serves a dual purpose: it brings us into familiar, yet respectful, relationship with the great Bible characters, and teaches us the great moral principles that underlie character. You have fairly dissected these patriarchs, and exhibited to us, on the point of your scalpel of criticism, the stuff of which men are made."

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From Rev. L. R. Dunn, D.D., *Author of "Sermons on the Higher Life," in Zion's Herald*: "The subjects are well and wisely chosen, and are presented in a clear and forcible style. . . . No one can read them without profit. Parents may put them into the hands of their children; teachers may give them to their pupils; Sabbath-school labourers may furnish them to the youth of their care; and employers may place them before their employes, with the assurance that their teachings will help to build up a character of honesty, truthfulness, purity, and goodness. It is well, in such an age as this, to have such a book to guide and guard our young men, and young women too, in building up a character for God and eternity. . . . We can commend these lectures to our young people in every place, and trust that the characters which they form will be after the models so faithfully presented in them by the genial and cultured author."

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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Opinions of the Press (continued).

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Western Christian Advocate: "We are pleased with Dr. C. H. Payne's volume of addresses and sermons, which have recently issued from the press. It is thoughtful, well-written, and timely. Coming from the president of one of our important institutions of learning, we hope it will be widely circulated among the young people of Methodism, and that it will afford our zealous and anxious pastors a valuable aid in impressing upon the young men and women of the Church the supreme importance to them of building up a symmetrical and noble character. Pastors will help on their work by recommending to intelligent and thoughtful young people the purchase and the attentive perusal of this volume."

Opinions of the Press (continued).

Canada Methodist Magazine, Toronto, Canada: "Those who have had the pleasure of hearing President Payne's admirable lectures in Canada will be glad to have this volume from his pen. It is marked by the same vigour of thought, the same grace of expression, the same loftiness of purpose, which characterized his spoken utterances. These discourses have a unity of subject which is rare in a continued series. They all illustrate the great theme of character-building. Among the types chosen to illustrate this theme are: Joseph the Incorruptible Young Man; Moses the Uncrowned King; David: From the Sheepfold to the Throne; Absalom the Fast Young Man; Solomon the Brilliant Failure; Daniel the Uncompromising Young Man; Lot the Self-seeker; Ruth the True-hearted; and other instructive types as, John, Thomas, Cornelius, Timothy, and Paul. The lessons of these lives are clearly delineated and strongly enforced. We commend the book especially to the study of young men."

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